

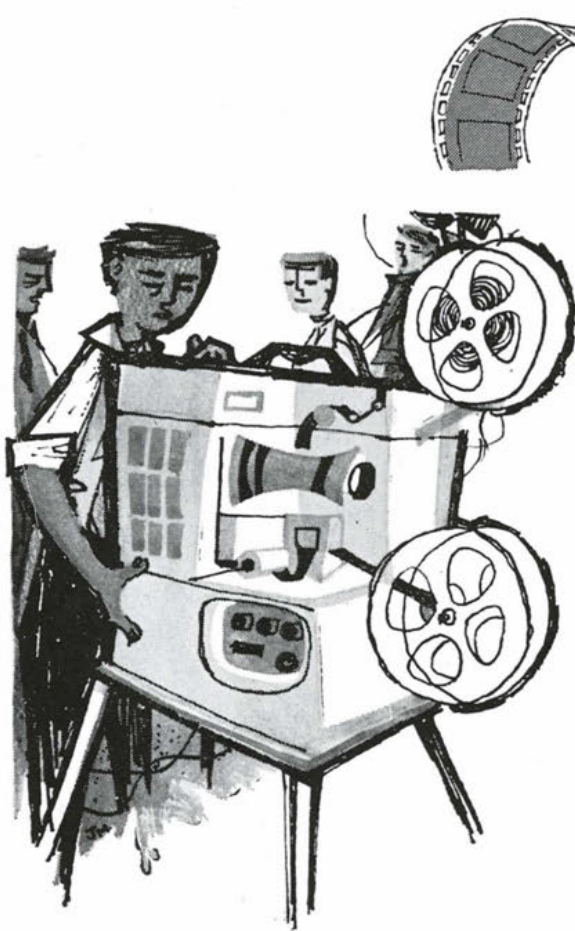
SPRING 1959

Three Shillings and Sixpence

SIGHT AND SOUND



The Film Quarterly



**More
new films
from**

You can build up a programme to suit every taste from the Ford Film Library Catalogue. The wide range of subjects includes *The Story of the Motor Car Engine*, Dick ('The Little Island') Williams' new colour cartoon film which instructs and entertains young and old. *Bandwagon*, a sales film with a difference—an 'off beat' treatment of Thames vans featuring the Cy Laurie jazz band. It sells you and sends you.

The Three Graces—through France and Switzerland to the sun-drenched Riviera in a Consul, Zephyr convertible and a Zodiac. Just the film if you're holiday planning!

Journey for Marianne—a travelogue in colour tracing a Canadian girl's holiday by car through the loveliest of Britain.

Your Automatic Choice—a film in light-hearted vein showing the pleasures of driving with automatic transmission, and how it works. These sound films, and many more, are available on 16mm. Send for catalogue containing full information.

Borrow them FREE from



FILM LIBRARY

Dept. R5G 88 Regent Street, London, W.1



A NEW SHELL FILM

'PATTERN OF SUPPLY' shows how Shell tackles its problems of distribution

In jungle or desert, in valleys or on mountain-tops, people need fuel for cooking, refrigeration, heating and for many other purposes.

Supplies for the more inaccessible places are often a problem: here, cylinders of Shell 'Butagaz'—liquified petroleum gas—are taken by mule to isolated mountain cabins in the Swiss Alps.

'Pattern of Supply' is in colour, and 16mm. and 35mm. copies can be supplied. Its running time is 27 mins.

In England and Wales copies are available on loan from Shell-Mex and B.P. Limited, Shell-Mex House, Strand, London, W.C.2.

In Scotland, from Scottish Oils and Shell-Mex Limited, 53 Boswell Street, Glasgow, C.2.

In other countries from the local Shell company.

Copies are not available from the Petroleum Films Bureau.



A walk in the forest

A NEW BP FILM

Gerry Lambert and Bill Ross are geologists, working deep in the heart of the Papuan jungle. Their job is to search this trackless area for possible sources of oil.

To obtain food, they approach a primitive village. In the course of bartering, one of the natives in their team offends an old native woman who wants him to give her his shirt.

Soon afterwards, the native falls sick. He believes the old woman has put a curse on him. At all costs he must be taken to hospital—but the hospital is 300 miles away. How he finally gets there—carried, rowed, flown—forms the climax to this exciting story of exploration in a primitive land.

RUNNING TIME: 23 MINUTES · EASTMANCOLOR · 35MM. AND 16MM. COPIES

Sponsored by

BRITISH PETROLEUM

PETROLEUM FILMS BUREAU, 29 NEW BOND STREET, W.1.

TELEPHONE HYDE PARK 7565

Oil touches the lives of everyone everywhere and BP films show the story of oil in the modern world in human terms—its discovery, recovery, transportation, refining and uses. Behind every aspect and achievement of this great industry there are people—people of many different kinds in many different parts of the world.

These are the subjects and settings of BP films of which normally 35mm. and 16mm. copies are available on free loan to any recognised organisation.



The British Film Institute
QUARTERLY GAZETTE
A Report on the Institute's Activities

No. 28

April, 1959

164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2

FILMS FROM THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

The following films have been added to the Distribution Library
during the last three months.

	Reels Sd./St.	Gauge mm.	Running Time
ART AND HISTORY OF THE FILM			
Films of Georges Melies Pt. 1. (Vanishing Lady, Brahmin & Butterfly, India-rubber Head, Coronation of King Edward VII)	1 St.	16	12 mins.
Hotel des Invalides (French Commentary, and English Explanatory titles) ...	3 Sd.	16	34 mins.
Pacific 231	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
FILMS ON THE ARTS			
Can Art be Democratic? (AR/TV.)	3 Sd.	16	26 mins.
Do Fakes Matter? (AR/TV.)	3 Sd.	16	26 mins.
Encounter in the Dark (AR/TV.)	3 Sd.	16	26 mins.
Reg. Butler (B.B.C. Film)	2 Sd.	16	14 mins.
STUDY EXTRACTS			
Birth of a Nation "A" (Battle Sequence)	1 St.	16	12 mins.
Birth of a Nation "B" (Klu-Klux-Klan Ride)	1 St.	16	10 mins.
Foolish Wives "A" (Visit to the Slums)	1 St.	16	11 mins.
Earth "A" (Vassili's decision on the Funeral)	1 St.	16	13 mins.
FILMS FOR FILM SOCIETIES			
Calabuch	9 Sd.	16/35	93 mins.
Professor Hannibal (Hungary) with Eng. sub-titles	9 Sd.	35	91 mins.
Toccatto for Toy Trains (Charles Eames)	2 Sd.	35 col.	15 mins.
B.F.I. SPECIALISED LIBRARIES			
<i>Canoeing Films</i>			
Summer Isles	2 St.	16 col.	18 mins.
<i>Television</i>			
B.B.C. Television	½ Sd.	16	4 mins.
Smallpox Outbreak (B.B.C. T.V.)	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
<i>Transport</i>			
Loco Spotters	1 Sd.	16	9 mins.
Third Avenue El	1 Sd.	16 col.	11 mins.
FILMS ON 8MM.			
Burlesque on Carmen (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	14 mins.
Floorwalker, The (Chaplin)	2 St.	8	29 mins.
His Musical Career (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	14 mins.
In the Park (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	14 mins.
Mabel's Busy Day (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	14 mins.
New Janitor, The (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	14 mins.
One A.M. (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	16 mins.
Tango Tangle (Chaplin)	1 St.	8	12 mins.
Exercise Movie and Tape	1 St.	8	8 mins.
Please note that the following films have been transferred from C.B.A. to The Art and History Section of the Distribution Library.			
Fetes de France	2 Sd.	35	20 mins.
Who To Be	1 Sd.	35 col.	8 mins.
The following films have been withdrawn:			
Le Million (Clair)	7 Sd.	16/35	81 mins.
Le Million "A" (Roof-top Chase)	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Ronde, La	11 Sd.	16	100 mins.

LECTURE DATES

APRIL 1959

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
1	7.00 p.m.	Cinema and the Social Attitude	Paddy Whannel	University Hall, Liverpool	Society for Education Through Art
3	2.00 p.m.	The American Musical	John Huntley	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique
8	7.30 p.m.	Cinema in the U.S.A.	John Huntley	Medway Adult Education Centre, Chatham	Kent Education Committee, Medway Div.
10	8.45 p.m.	Films, Film-making and Film Appreciation	John Huntley	Bedford College Students' Hostel	London Youth Committee, L.C.C.
12	6.00 p.m.	Music and the Cinema	John Huntley	Home Office, Horseferry House	Home Office Gramophone Society
17	2.00 p.m.	Free Cinema	Paddy Whannel	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique
18/19	Weekend Course	Film Appreciation Weekend	Irvine Hunt	Plymouth	Plymouth Film Society and Swarthmore Settlement
22	1.30 p.m.	Films of Pearl White	John Huntley	John Lewis Ltd.	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
22	7.30 p.m.	The Soviet Cinema	John Huntley	Medway Adult Education Centre, Chatham	Kent Education Committee, Medway Div.
23	Not yet fixed	The Negro in Films (Paul Robeson)	Marie Seton	Slough Co-operative Society	Slough Co-operative Society
24	8.00 p.m.	Film Acting	John Huntley	Banstead Film Society	Banstead Film Society

MAY 1959

1	2.00 p.m.	The Work of De Sica	Stanley Reed	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique
5	11.00 a.m.	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel	Borough Road College, Isleworth	Borough Road College
6	1.30 p.m.	Films of Rudolph Valentino	Roger Manvell	John Lewis Ltd.	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
6	8.15 p.m.	Music and the Film	John Huntley	Barham Lounge, Wembley	Wembley Barham Evening Townswomen's Guild

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
6	7.30 p.m.	The Film in France	Stanley Reed	Medway Adult Education Centre, Chatham	Kent Education, Committee, Medway Div.
12	7.30 p.m.	Music in Films	John Huntley	Ruislip Co-operative Society (Lady Bankes School)	Ruislip Co-operative Film Society
15	2.00 p.m.	The Japanese Cinema	Marie Seton	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique
20	1.30 p.m.	The Films of Douglas Fairbanks	John Huntley	John Lewis Ltd.	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
20	7.30 p.m.	Documentary and Free Cinema	Paddy Whannel	Medway Adult Education Centre, Chatham	Kent Education Committee, Medway Div
21	2.00 p.m.	Film Appreciation	John Huntley	Borough Road College, Isleworth	Borough Road College
26	6.30 p.m.	The Use of Sound	John Huntley	Television Studios, Lime Grove	B.B.C. Film Club
29	2.00 p.m.	The Work of Robert Bresson	Stanley Reed	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique
31	7.15 p.m.	Comedy in the Cinema	David Sylvester	The Big Classical, The College, Cheltenham	Cheltenham Film Society School Programme

JUNE 1959

1	7.30 p.m.	The Cinema Industry Today	Charles Everett	Camberwell Round Table	The City of London Society
12	2.00 p.m.	Not yet fixed	Not yet fixed	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique
26	2.00 p.m.	The Work of Carol Reed	John Huntley	London School of Film Technique, Brixton	London School of Film Technique

National Film Theatre Celebrity Lectures

Mr. Jack Clayton has agreed to be present at the last of the Sunday afternoon Celebrity Lectures, on April 12th, at 3 o'clock. Extracts will be shown from "Room at the Top". Admission: Full Members: Free. Associates: 2/6d.

FORUM 4: THE VISUAL PERSUADERS. National Film Theatre, May 3rd—10th, 1959. An 8-day Forum on CINEMA and TELEVISION as ART and COMMUNICATION is being presented at the invitation of the British Film Institute by the Joint Council for Education Through Art. The programme will include films, film extracts, Television transmissions, demonstrations, discussion and speakers engaged in Film, T.V., Criticism and Education.

The Forum will define the responsibilities of those who produce, assess and consume the products of cinema and television.

<i>Sessions</i>	Sunday May 3rd	11.00—5.30 p.m.	COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION
	Sunday May 3rd	6.30 p.m.	HUMANISM—THE MAINSTREAM OF CINEMA
	Monday May 4th	6.30 p.m.	CREATIVE WORKSHOP
	Tuesday May 5th	6.00 p.m.	FACE IN THE MIRROR
	Wednesday May 6th	6.00 p.m.	SCREEN TEST
	Thursday May 7th	6.00 p.m.	BREAK THROUGH? (Can the new writers save the cinema?)
	Friday May 8th	6.00 p.m.	POPULAR IMAGES
	Saturday May 9th	10.30—1.00 p.m.	THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS: TV and the Child.
	Saturday May 9th	3.30 p.m.	TEENAGERS: PROBLEMS OR PEOPLE?
	Saturday May 9th	7.30 p.m.	WAR ON THE SCREEN. A film analysed.
	Sunday May 10th	10.30—1.00 p.m.	PRESSURE ON THE ARTIST
	Sunday May 10th	2.30 p.m.	WHO CARES?
	Sunday May 10th	6.30 p.m.	SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT?

Speakers at the above sessions will include:

Raymond Williams	Richard Roud	John Berger	Philip Purser
Karel Reisz	Leslie Mallory	Derek Hill	Tom Driberg
Stanley Reed	Brian Groombridge	John Huntley	Alan Lovell
Stuart Hall			

For full details apply to the Education Officer, British Film Institute, 4, Great Russell Street, W.C.1. COVent Garden 2801.

THE BOOK LIBRARY

A recent change in the Book Library regulations now permits members of the Institute to borrow two books at a time.

The following books have recently been added to the library. (Those marked with an asterisk are available for loan to members.)

- *AGEE, James.—Agee on film. New York, McDowell Obolensky, 1958.
- ARMITAGE, Merle.—George Gershwin, man and legend. New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1958.
- BARTHEL, Manfred.—Heinz Rühmann. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1957.
- *BAZIN, André.—Qu'est ce que le cinéma? Paris, Éditions du cerf. 1958.
- BERGER, Ludwig.—Kathé Dorsche. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1957.
- BERGER, Ludwig.—Ernst Schroder. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1958.
- *BOMBACK, H.—Handbook of amateur cinematography, vol. 2. London, Fountain Press. 1958.
- BOOST, C.—Dutch art today—film. Amsterdam, Contact. 1959.
- *BRAINE, John.—Room at the top. London, Penguin. 1959.
- *CAHN, William.—The laugh makers. New York, Putnam. 1957.
- *CARY, Joyce.—The horse's mouth. London, Michael Joseph. 1958.
- CAMERON.—Sound motion picture recording and reproduction. California, Cameron. 1950.
- CLAIRMONT, Leonard.—Professional cine-photographer 1956-57. California, Ver Halem. 1956.
- *COHN, Art.—Nine lives of Mike Todd. London, Hutchinson. 1959.
- *CURRAN, Charles W.—Screenwriting and production techniques. New York, Hastings House. 1958.
- DUNN, J. F.—Exposure manual. London, Fountain. 1958.
- *ENSER, A. G. S.—Filmed books and plays, supplement 1955-1957. London, Grafton. 1958.
- *FRANTZ, J. B. & CHOATE, J. E.—American cowboy. London, Thames and Hudson. 1956.
- *HIMMELWEIT, Hilde and others.—Television and the child. London, Oxford University Press. 1958.
- *HLASKO, Marek.—Eighth day of the week. London, Allen & Unwin. 1959.
- KENNEDY, John.—Tommy Steele. London, Souvenir press. 1958.
- KERR, Walter.—Criticism and censorship. New York, Bruce publishing co. 1954.
- KNAPP, Bettina L.—Louis Jouvet, man of the theatre. New York, Columbia. 1957.
- LANDAU, Jacob M.—Studies in the Arab theatre and cinema. London, O.U.P. for University of Pennsylvania. 1958.
- LUFT, Friedrich.—Gustaf Gründgens. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1957.
- MAY, Marl A. & LUMSDAINE, Arthur.—Learning from films. London, O.U.P. for Yale University. 1958.
- MITCHELL, Robert A.—Manual of practical projection. California, International projectionist. 1950.
- PACKARD, Vance.—The hidden persuaders. London, Longmans Green. 1957.
- PFEIFFER, Herbert.—Paul Wegener. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1957.
- *POSTLETHWAITE, H. A.—Introduction to cine. London, Fountain press. 1958.
- *ROSENBERG & WHITE.—Mass culture—the popular arts in America. New York, Falcon's wing. 1957.
- SCHLAPPNER, Martin.—Von Rossellini zu Fellini. Rome Origo. 1958.
- SIMON, Karl Kunter.—Jean Cocteau—filme. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1958.
- SMEETS, Marcel.—Cinéma et l'adulte. Paris, éditions Soléde. 1957.
- STOBART, Tom.—Adventurer's eye. London, Odhams. 1958.
- ULRICHSEN, Erik.—Carl Th. Dreyer: om filmen. Copenhagen. Nyt nordisk forlag. 1959.
- WENO, Joachim.—Lilli Palmer. Berlin, Rembrandt verlag. 1957.
- *WHITEBAIT, William.—International film annual, no. 2. London, John Calder. 1958.

SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 28 No. 2 SPRING 1959

contents

features

- 55 The Front Page
60 A Free Hand: JACK CLAYTON, CLIVE DONNER,
ROBERT HAMER, SETH HOLT, PAT JACKSON,
JOHN KRISH, JACK LEE, TONY RICHARDSON,
PAUL ROTH
65 In the Picture
78 Sounds from the Westertoren:
ALBERT JOHNSON
101 Correspondence
106 Current Film Guide

articles

- 56 Room at the Top?: PENELOPE HOUSTON
68 From a Hollywood Notebook:
GAVIN LAMBERT
74 Eisenstein's 'Bezhin Meadow': JAY LEYDA
80 Animated Cinema; the Way Forward:
ANDRE MARTIN
86 Not Quite So Intimate: NIGEL KNEALE
95 Topical Television: DEREK HILL
98 Face to Face; James Agee: RICHARD ROUD

film reviews

- 89 March to Aldermaston: PENELOPE HOUSTON
89 The Horse's Mouth: KENNETH CAVANDER
90 Gigi: DAVID VAUGHAN
91 Anna Lucasta: ALBERT JOHNSON
92 Paprika and A Sunday Romance: ROBERT VAS
92 Separate Tables: PETER JOHN DYER
93 The Last Hurrah: LINDSAY ANDERSON
94 The Doctor's Dilemma: PETER JOHN DYER
94 The Roots of Heaven: DEREK HILL
94 The 39 Steps: PENELOPE HOUSTON
94 The Black Orchid: PETER JOHN DYER

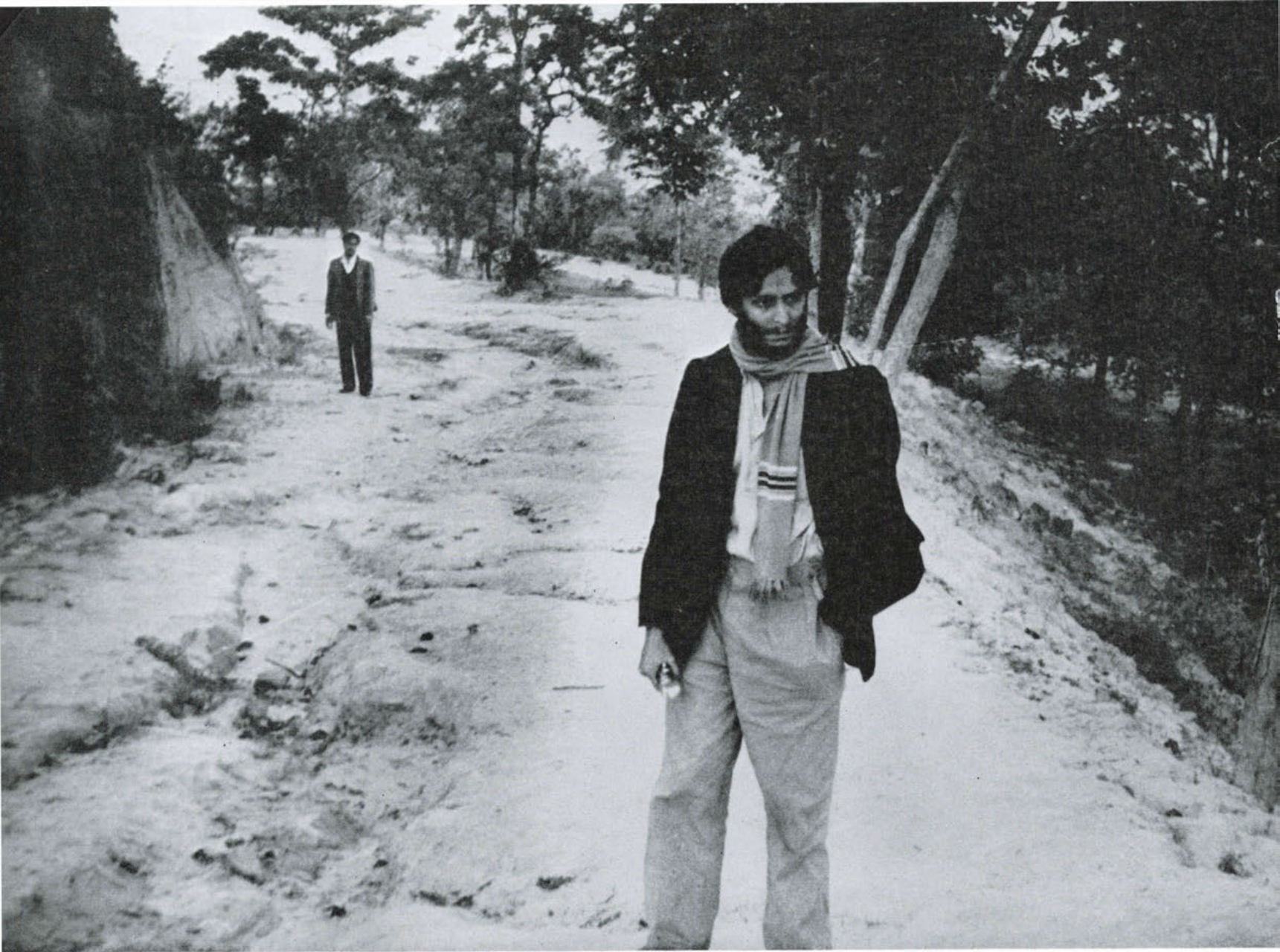
book reviews

- 100 Television and the Child: DAVID ROBINSON
101 Von Rossellini zu Fellini: WILHELM VIOLA

ON THE COVER: Alec Guinness and
Bette Davis in Robert Hamer's
The Scapegoat.

SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

Copyright in all articles originally published in SIGHT AND SOUND is reserved. EDITORIAL, PUBLISHING AND ADVERTISING OFFICES: British Film Institute, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2. (Covent Garden 2801.) EDITOR: Penelope Houston. ASSOCIATE: Peter John Dyer. DESIGNER: John Harmer, L.S.I.A. EDITORIAL BOARD: Penelope Houston, Ernest Lindgren, Stanley Reed, James Quinn, David Robinson. BUSINESS MANAGER: Desmond Thirlwell. Entered as 2nd class matter at the Post Office, New York, N.Y. Printed in England. Published and distributed in the U.S.A. by SIGHT AND SOUND. All American advertising inquiries should be directed to John Wolff, 306 West 11th Street, New York 14, N.Y.



Satyajit Ray has now completed his trilogy of Bengali life. Above and right, two scenes from "Apu in the World."



THE FRONT PAGE

CENSORSHIP, NEVER LONG OUT of the headlines, has been a particularly live issue during the past three months. The *Lolita* controversy smoulders through the correspondence columns and the literary pages. Reactions to a television play's scare announcement lead to Parliamentary questions, raising the whole issue of television's own freedom from restrictions. In the cinema, *Operation Teutonic Sword*, banned by the B.B.F.C., becomes the subject of London County Council debate, narrowly secures its licence—and promptly undergoes a new form of ban when General Speidel's solicitors give warning of possible legal action. Critics of the censor's original decision, which was based largely on the fact that the film attacked a living person, here find support for their contention that protection for the individual is the responsibility of the courts rather than the censor.

Meanwhile, and permanently, there are larger issues of film censorship at stake. Over the past few years, many filmgoers have genuinely forgotten that the 'X' certificate had any other purpose than to provide a sort of safe conduct into the cinemas for sex and horror. The certificate which was launched with such serious purpose, to ensure that films of quality could be seen by adult audiences and, better still, seen uncut, has acquired a disastrous reputation. From the first, it was exploited by a small section of the trade; and recently, as the film industry's economic crisis has become more acute, exploitation has inevitably increased. The double 'X' programme; the intolerably vulgar posters (which can be censored, though not by the B.B.F.C.); the cinema's own squalid equivalents to the horror comics and the strip-tease act—these are the associates of the 'X'.

Clearly it must be at least a part of the Board's policy to redeem the original intention of the certificate. Mr. John Trevelyan, Secretary of the B.B.F.C., has lately spoken of the problem of ensuring that films are seen by the 'right' audience; and there have been rumours of the possibility of some new certificate which would in effect carry out the job the 'X' has failed to do. One suggestion tentatively put forward has been that not only films but cinemas should be classified—in other words, that local authorities should be in a position to ensure that certain films, not regarded as suitable for mass audiences, would be seen only in cinemas which could be relied on not to exploit them. The difficulties, clearly, would be considerable. Where does legitimate publicity end and vulgar exploitation begin? Who would be the judge of respectability, and against what yardstick should it be measured? The publishers of some paper-backs have a tradition of concealing the most exemplary classics behind the most lurid book jackets; and the temptation for the cinema, in a time of crisis, is obviously the same.

But the idea of *some* variation in censorship procedure is clearly worth exploring. Under our existing system, a small number of films (*Torero* and *Les Amants* are recent examples) cannot be shown without damaging cuts. No one would probably claim that these films should secure circuit bookings, any more than that *Lolita* should become school-room reading. But if a formula could be worked out whereby such films could be given limited public showing, the cinema would be taking an adult step forward. Any new plan should especially consider the whole problem of cutting. It may be that censor cuts seldom do positive harm to a film; equally, they often do little positive good to anyone. A violent scene retains its atmosphere, even minus a few especially brutal shots; a love scene can be made to appear more suggestive. The present 'X' certificate age limit is only sixteen, and clearly the 16–18 age group needs protection. But if certain films could be shown uncut, and to genuinely adult audiences rather than to teenagers, it would be worth all the problems of devising a foolproof system. Film societies, and the National Film Theatre, are like club theatres in that they are exempt from censorship. They need to retain this essential freedom: the object should be to extend it.

ROOM AT THE TOP?

by PENELOPE HOUSTON



Return to Dufton: Laurence Harvey in "Room at the Top".

THE YOUNG MAN IN A provincial lodging, precariously poised between working-class origins and professional future, openly derisive of the 'system', the Establishment, taking out his frustrations in buccaneering talk and a raw social and political awareness . . . In the years since Kingsley Amis created Jim Dixon, this has become the image of a new literary hero. "This state of mind . . . combined an external misanthropy with hidden longings for affection and tenderness, a cynical estimate of human nature with an admiration for its high, heroic moments, a pursuit of love with a tragic inability to be faithful to it when it came. It was at war both with society and itself." The comment, which is Sir Maurice Bowra's on the

Russian generation of Lermontov, accords well enough with the popular view of these unwilling heroes of our own times.

From the first journalist's affixing of the Angry Young Man label, the "movement" was painfully at the mercy of its publicity. John Wain and John Braine, the Royal Court playwrights, heralded by John Osborne, the Free Cinema group, the founders of *Universities and Left Review*, Colin Wilson and his Outsiders, the skiffle groups and the rock 'n' rollers all found themselves banded together, the exploiters and the exploited, under this comprehensive, inaccurate and often unwelcome slogan. The phrase itself moved from headline writer's snap judgment to gossip-writer's cliché: long ago it became a bore. Now the consolidation of positive gains is following the shake-up. We have the novel of the late 'fifties, even if it far too often reads like second-hand Amis: the young man from the provinces, the dynamiter of the Establishment, has become a cliché in his own right. We have a theatre influenced by Sloane Square as well as by Tennessee Williams, and for the better. We have the imaginative social criticism typified by a book such as Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*.

The feature cinema has remained aloof from all this. *Lucky Jim* was admittedly filmed, but as painless farce in a Redbrick setting. Ted Willis's brand of social realism reaches the screen, in *Woman in a Dressing Gown* and *No Trees in the Street*, but the elements of protest it carries are not such as to strike a contemporary nerve. Mr. Willis, one feels, is a writer for whom two and two will always make four and who will leave out of account any more complex factors in the social equation. *Room at the Top*, however, is something different. The publication of *Lucky Jim*, the first night of *Look Back in Anger*, were crucial dates; and we can at least take the risk of hoping that the opening of *Room at the Top* might be another. Press comment on the film, ranging from Miss Powell's enthusiastic greeting to Miss Lejeune's depression, Mr. Majdalany's mockery and the Top Paper's sedate "A Film not quite out of the Top Drawer" at least gave incontrovertible notice that something controversial had arrived.

2

A young man, fugitive from a slum upbringing, travelling towards a new town and the possibility of a new life, is passed by a rich girl in a rich car. Here is the advertising man's symbol of luxury, translated into his own personal symbol of the unattainable . . . This opening scene belongs to another film; not to *Room at the Top* but to George Stevens' *A Place in the Sun*, adapted from *An American Tragedy*. It is relevant because John Braine's Joe Lampton often seems so close to the screen

version of Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths—almost as close as the titles of the two films. Joe, seeing his version of the girl and the car from the window of his new office, at once sizes them up, assesses their cash value and their availability. Clyde sees them as infinitely remote. But both men are moving away from the past; both encounter girls who might be persuaded to give them what they want and are checked by the awkward realities of other love affairs. In the end, both are guilty of a kind of murder: Clyde lets *his* Alice drown, and Joe's break with Alice Aisgill sends her directly out to her death in a car smash.

Unfair though it may seem to set Mr. Braine up against Dreiser's heavy guns, it is also revealing. Dreiser's hero, seduced and destroyed by a dream, is a character clearly seen by a realist and moralist. Mr. Braine, for all his parade of clear-sightedness, has produced a novel whose mistiness derives precisely from its lack of real moral conviction. Joe, he tells us, shatters something human in himself when he allows his life to be determined by ambition. But we are left, in the novel and inevitably in the film, with a double question: how far is the price he pays inevitable; and how much was there in Joe to destroy?

Joe has come to Warnley (any Yorkshire industrial town, and for the film's purposes represented by Bradford), from the depressing squalors of back-street poverty. He found his education in a prison camp during the war, and has the cockiness, the raw aggressions and uncertainties, of the rebel without a conviction or a cause. He is not one of Stendhal's young men from the pro-

vinces: his ambition, simply, is for the life money can buy, and he is prepared to seduce—if necessary, to love—Susan Brown, daughter of Warnley's leading industrialist, as the shortest cut to it. His affair with Alice Aisgill, older, unhappily married, with values more complex and sophisticated than Joe's, brings with it a kind of tenderness. But he is still go-getter enough to aim at the top, though not quite tough enough to pay the price without regret. Alice's death presents him with the bill: she has to die so that Joe can be aroused as forcefully as possible to guilt, can embark on his marriage like a man beginning a prison sentence.

The ambiguities, which Neil Paterson's clever script has been unable to circumvent, are bound up in the interpretation of Joe. Is he the victim of his own character, or of a social system which has formed him and given him cause for bitterness? Are his intense class jealousies important only to himself? Has he even ability—apart from a talent for seduction? Laurence Harvey's playing of the part leaves these open questions: it has intelligence without depth, a cutting edge too often blunted by the actor's instinct to play for sympathy. At its best, here is clever impersonation rather than the solidity of life.

One criticises the novel because it is important to have a clear view of just what it offers the film-maker: a setting too often disregarded; a subject which, however flawed in interpretation, can still be forcefully used; a real sting of anger, finding outlets in social tension. Two scenes provide instances of how this can operate. Joe's quarrel with Alice, when he talks of the prison camp, of

"Room at the Top": Simone Signoret and Hermione Baddeley.



escape as an officer's luxury of heroism, is full of grinding bitterness, unhealed wounds of humiliation. But the lunch-time scene with Susan's father, who first tests Joe by offering to buy him off, then opens the way to his marriage, reminds one of a melodramatic confrontation out of Galsworthy, the dramatic mood as misplaced as the soup-plate which (through a continuity slip) appears, disappears and reappears in front of Joe. One scene has been felt, the other merely dreamt; and the split runs through the novel.

The film, strong enough to find something of its own mood, scores through the precision of its detail. The cluttered, ugly little flat in which Joe and Alice meet, the office, where the girls look warily up to greet the newcomer and send signals flashing across the room, the morning rush to the bus stop, with the town spread out below, the return to a home now outgrown: all these are pin-pointed. There have been complaints of lack of verisimilitude in accent and setting. And, of course, it might have been better to rely on players from the northern repertory companies than to assemble a cast of such varied styles and antecedents. (Donald Wolfitt, Donald Houston, Hermione Baddeley, Richard Pasco, Raymond Huntley—all of them good, if not precisely local.) But we have little enough imagination of this kind in the British cinema to afford the luxury of criticising a film which has genuinely tried.

Care has gone into finding that desolate, empty stretch of beach, scene for a melancholy English idyll, into staging the office scene, in which two conversations overlap so that the audience hears of Alice's death while Joe still listens to congratulations on his engagement, into recording the final, ironic epitaph, the long-held shot of the car moving through Warnley, taking Joe up to the top. Set against this the caricature treatment of the rich, the over-conscious filming of the beating-up scene as an almost ritual exercise in violence, or even that luckless club-room lunch, and the balance still remains well on the side of the film.

The director, Jack Clayton, has been associate producer and producer on an incongruous assortment of titles: *Moulin Rouge* and *Beat the Devil*; *Three Men in a Boat* and *Sailor, Beware*; *I Am a Camera* and *The Story of Esther Costello*. He has directed only one short story film, *The Bespoke Overcoat*. This first feature, though, has nothing amateur or casual about it. The sharp, assured moment by moment flow of the film comes remarkably from a new talent; and if Mr. Clayton still seems to have style rather than his own style, to misjudge occasional effects (the use of children, for instance, in the scene of Joe's battered humiliation) by pressing them too hard, to fall for the merely fashionable in his love scenes shot in a pattern of obsessive close-ups, one still doesn't doubt that he is a filmmaker. The film flickers off and on like an electric torch, but when it's shining the light has intensity enough.

The intensity, finally, is what counts. John Braine's novel may have achieved *Daily Express* serialisation and best-seller sales for its sex episodes rather than its social comment. The film, similarly, may climb to the top partly on its X certificate, its heavy-breathing sales campaign and some dialogue calculated to jolt a few traditionalists used to the discreet reticence of sub-titles. But the view of English provincial life that we are given, however partisan and ego-centric, carries its own charge of truth. The Joe Lamptons are challenging the Mr. Browns, the values of Warnley are responsible for the slums of Dufton, the Alice Aisgills are our contemporary Madame Bovaries. Simone Signoret's

performance in this part is quite beautifully judged: she conveys a whole life behind the character, makes the restless, dissatisfied Alice a woman behind whom the years stretch away in boredom and frustration. Her final scene, as she stands confronting her own reflection in a pub mirror, with the evidence of age staring her in the face, is weighted with all the finality the image can express. She can give us the tragedy, without for a moment overlooking its shoddiness.

There is nothing great in *Room at the Top* (except, occasionally in Simone Signoret's performance), but there is much that is vigorous, compelling and of the moment. Finally, though, this seems a film which can only be summed up in the special context of our present day cinema. Firstly, it has the impact of genuine innovation: a new subject, a new setting, a new talent. More significantly, it shows what can be achieved in spite of compromise. This is not a work conceived from the ground up as a film, made without reference to the box-office, cast first and foremost in the strictest interests of truth. But Jack Clayton and Neil Paterson, with considerable help from the cameraman, Freddie Francis, and art director, Ralph Brinton, have still given us a good deal to be grateful for. Half a loaf, in this context, looks very much better than the usual bread substitute.

3

Is *Room at the Top* a film which really opens a door? To snatch at the slightest of straws, to look for trends and movements where there are no more than a few half-formulated projects, is certainly to invite disillusionment. But something, however tenuously and uncertainly, seems to be stirring in the British cinema. What happens next will depend on the talent and persuasiveness of half a dozen writers and directors, on the imponderables of public response, and on whatever weight the critics are prepared to throw into the scale.

Evidence: *Room at the Top*, and in subject at least *The Horse's Mouth*, *Look Back in Anger*, *The Entertainer*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Live Like Pigs*, *A Taste of Honey*, *The Long and the Short and the Tall*. Here are three completed films, five titles announced for filming and at more or less advanced stages of preparation. Some of these have had a difficult passage. *Look Back in Anger* has taken a long time to reach the screen; *Lord of the Flies*, now sold to Sam Spiegel's company, was for some while in the hands of Ealing and reached the script stage there. It is an intimidating subject, this one—the story of a group of prep school boys cast away on a desert island and reverting to primitive tribal rituals and savageries—and without the strictest loyalty to William Golding's novel it could collapse into sensational disaster. *Live Like Pigs* and *A Taste of Honey* are both plays about people conditioned by poverty; *The Long and the Short and the Tall* tells a war story that is neither heroic nor traditional. And none of these eight subjects has much in common with the usual range of the British cinema.

Clearly it is no accident that all these various projects originate in novels or plays, with half the titles belonging to productions initially launched at the Royal Court. The cinema has not sent out its own exploratory expeditions, but it could scarcely ignore indefinitely the trophies brought back by more adventurous pioneers, or the obvious public response to the mood of tough individuality, the questioning of established values, that these writers represent. John Osborne's plays and John Braine's novel clearly represent

the safest of beginnings: they have achieved success behind them, and exploitable success at that. But John and James Woolf, whose firm of Remus produced *Room at the Top*, Tony Richardson and John Osborne, working through their own Woodfall company and Associated British, were still taking chances. These are independent companies, and it is from here that we should be able to expect innovation.

To the critic, an exasperatingly wrong-headed production of an acknowledgedly difficult novel (of, for the sake of argument, a book like *Lord of the Flies*) might well seem better value than the tenth repetition of a war story which could only borrow its clichés from last year's success. This will not be true of the public; and these new projects are going to need all the success they can manage. An example, if one is needed, comes from America, where a commercial success like *Marty* launched a string of lively television adaptations, abruptly killed by an indifferent public. Here is the cinema's particular hazard: the cycle which finds itself fashionable, only to suffer the painful operation of the law of diminishing returns. All hopes of a British "renaissance", which Dilys Powell discerned in *Room at the Top*, could be illusory unless we try to define for ourselves precisely where we are going.

The cinema, of course, has had its own nonconformists, its intransigents, in the Free Cinema movement. This held its first show just three years ago, paralleling the establishment of the Royal Court and the general upsurge of new writers, and it is disheartening that the organisers announce their latest programme, Free Cinema Six, as the last to appear under their banner. Lindsay Anderson, most closely associated with the movement, has announced that he considers it a "failure", regrets a lack of support from a "lively younger generation." All the same, one is reluctant to begin writing obituaries for Free Cinema. It may seem ironic that Lindsay Anderson himself should now be working at the Royal Court, just as Tony Richardson (whose only previous film venture was for the first Free Cinema show) has moved from the Court to film *Look Back in Anger*. But if Free Cinema did not prove the nucleus for a wider movement, if its purely native achievements still amount only to a handful of titles, it also provided something of incalculable value in its passionate concern. Audiences were stirred up, compelled to rethink some of the problems of film-making in Britain, just as the Royal Court's audiences have been driven to think about the theatre.

Free Cinema set out to be the documentary of people. Television, meanwhile, through a thousand haphazard interviews and unscripted encounters, has itself been exploring Britain, raising the issues and the conflicts so long ignored by our feature cinema. Writers have much less excuse than they had even five years ago for pretending unawareness of what can be made to interest the public. Yet writers, clearly, are what we desperately need. Neil Paterson, some of whose previous subjects (*The Kidnappers*, *High Tide at Noon*, etc.) suggested a screen talent no more than serviceable, takes a step forward with *Room at the Top*. Nigel Kneale will adapt *The Entertainer* as well as *Look Back in Anger*; and television's *Quatermass* series have shown his talent for presenting action against a background that is both carefully realistic and morally charged. Alun Falconer, with last year's *The Man Upstairs*, established himself as a writer able to give suspense fiction a firm edge of comment and character observation. But the cinema, if it is not going indefinitely to take its lead from novels and the stage, must



"The Entertainer" on the stage. Photograph by Julie Hamilton.

discover and use writers who are not frightened by reality.

If this new movement at present so vaguely discernible is to stand for anything, it must be for discovery. The novelists and playwrights banded together under the "Angry Young Man" label have succeeded in so far as they have really defined and exposed a contemporary mood. *Lucky Jim* was of its time; Kingsley Amis' last novel, *I Like It Here*, which sent the Amis-hero off to Portugal and ground away at travel-snobs and culture-snobs, was signally out of touch. John Osborne's plays have hit at a nerve. So, in its very different way, does the apprehension, the note of warning, the tilting at bureaucracy and militarism, that lies so close to the surface of the latest *Quatermass* episode. But one could list a dozen novels, some of them under Hutchinson's ambitious New Authors imprint, which have failed in impact because their mood of post-Amis serio-comic anger now seems only dated and repetitive.

The feature cinema, coming so late into the field, could easily find itself working over territory already well-travelled. *Room at the Top* can still give us the two qualities mainly needed: the sense of surprise and at the same time of recognition. We find in it what our feature cinema has so far failed to show us: the rebellious non-hero of the 1950's, the man who has pitched his little camp somewhere in the battlefield of provincial life; and we recognise what there is of truth in the picture. If the film-makers can advance from here, *Room at the Top* might be one of the real turning-points. The critics, at least, should play their own part in trying to keep the road signposted and the traffic moving.

a free hand

JACK CLAYTON

CLIVE DONNER

ROBERT HAMER

SETH HOLT

PAT JACKSON

JOHN KRISH

JACK LEE

TONY RICHARDSON

PAUL ROTH

In this feature, we have put a specific question to a number of British film-makers. We asked them what particular subject they would personally choose to film at this moment, assuming that they enjoyed a completely free hand—ignoring the complexities of securing finance, distribution guarantees and so on. At the same time, we emphasised, we did not intend something purely academic and Utopian. The projects listed in the preceding article, "Room at the Top?" suggest that the British cinema's range of subjects may be widening. The old pattern is described by one of our contributors as "narrow, obsolete and evidently unprofitable"; and the economic crisis, if nothing else, makes it imperative that our cinema should no longer be content to stand still.

Although we posed a specific question, we did not expect many very concrete and specific answers. Some film-makers are understandably reluctant to give away ideas; some may find the whole exercise inevitably too hypothetical. We wanted primarily to stimulate discussion, to sound out constructive and creative ideas. The contributions we have received are encouragingly varied; and we are grateful to all the film-makers who felt it worthwhile to take part in this feature.

JACK CLAYTON

THE QUESTION OF HAVING the choice through the medium of your magazine of selecting *one* subject that I desire above all others to make into a film today is an intriguing thought; and after a little thought turns into a devastating question.

It seems to me to imply that under one magic book cover may be hidden all the many varied things that one feels worth saying in a film today. Think of the literary graveyard of rejects one would stand in; so many containing the thread or the bones and even sometimes the flesh of something very worthwhile . . .

If I find the one final choice impossible, the reasons for choosing a number of possible subjects are easier.

It must be a subject that has at least some aspect one can believe in, love and actually feel. It should, even if only partially, give the opportunity of expressing some facet of the reaction of man to his inner self and of that same man to the outside world. It must be valid for today: not the today of the newspaper stop-press, which is usually dead by the time it is read, but the real today, which, with different clothes, is true of yesterday and tomorrow.

Finally, the subject must try above all else to prize open the doors of convention and snap through as many archaic rules as possible.

• • •

CLIVE DONNER

WHEN I RECEIVED your letter, I was besotted more deeply than usual with plans for a feature film. And I had to ask myself whether this film was indeed "The Subject I Want to Film Most at this Time." Or whether some other unfulfilled project I had planned in the past warranted this description.

Supposing, I ruminated, it is this Current Project? Then, as I am working on it with the hope that it *will* get made, I would rather let the film speak for itself. As it is still in an

embryonic state, my reluctance to talk about it is not coyness, but an unwillingness to talk about chickens before they are hatched.

But, I thought, maybe there is a subject which I wanted most keenly to make and which I have temporarily forgotten. I went to the drawers and cupboards where all projects in abeyance are kept—known as “The Graveyard of Good Intentions”.

It made interesting reading for me!

I was rather astonished by the enormous number of scripts, proof novels, synopses, drafts, outlines and scribbled notes that were there. I was more astonished at the range the subjects covered. And I was totally astonished at how little interest I could find in any of them, compared with the enormous enthusiasm I must have felt about them in the first place . . .

However, you may say, was there *nothing* in the past which still attracted me? Well, yes! But unless I was working on that film now, all my comments on it would be Utopian. And, as you say in your letter, Utopia is not what you are looking for in this feature—nor can the film industry be doing with Utopian dreams just now.

So, the answer to my own question is that “The Subject I Most Want to Film at This Time” is the one I am working on at this time. And when this one is made or fails to be made, another will take its place.

Once, while working with David Lean in the cutting room, I saw him poised with scissors over a crucial bit of film. As he made a decisive snip, he said, “This’ll give the cineastes something to talk about”—it didn’t!

The problem you are examining in this feature, whether the climate of opinion is becoming more open to unrestricted and unconventional subjects, is not an artistic one, revolving round a growing adventurousness of film-makers. But a problem concerned with whether what film-makers want to make will actually get sponsored and shown.

In the British film industry, the climate of opinion is formed by what people go to see. Films like *The Horse’s Mouth*, *Look Back in Anger* and *Room at the Top* show that the people who make them have faith in what they want to film, and have been given the opportunity to put into practice their belief that audiences will go to see their films. If film-makers are given the opportunity to demonstrate their faith that audiences are interested in unusual subjects, then they will be freed from the need to create films to a narrow, obsolete and evidently unprofitable pattern. Then the struggle for an exciting and vigorous British film industry could be carried from the pages of *SIGHT AND SOUND* into the cinemas.

• • •

ROBERT HAMER

ALTHOUGH THE MANDATE states that this is not intended to be a Utopian exercise, I take certain leave to disagree with the premise. Surely, if the intention of the exercise is to encourage temerity and discourage timorousness on the part of the holders of the purse-strings, a certain Utopian

Above : Jack Clayton rehearsing with Simone Signoret.
Centre : Seth Holt and Maggie Smith on the set of “Nowhere to Go.”
Below : Paul Rotha with Maureen Delany and Barry Fitzgerald, who appear in his film about the Abbey Theatre.



approach is not only desirable but also necessary.

I therefore take it that I should exclude from consideration a long-favourite project which at last seems this side of the horizon, and search further abroad.

Here I can name no specific subject, but merely attempt to define a category which appeals to me.

Broadly—I would like to make a film about Crime. Not a film about a child-strangler, or about a jealous mistress with a gun—not about a gang of safe-breakers or forgers, but about the ordinary workaday villain.

Not a great thought-piece about Society and the Criminal, nor an over-reasoned documentary on Juvenile Delinquency, nor a quasi-pornographic item about the sorrows of prostitutes, but an examination, extenuating nothing and setting down nothing in malice, of the respective virtues and faults of the criminal, of the Police, of prosecuting Counsel, of defending Counsel, of Judges, of juries, of Prison Governors and Prison Officers, of the supposition that Preventive Detention prevents nothing except that which has already happened, that Corrective Training neither trains nor corrects. On what scale or in what framework this endeavour might be pursued, I hope I would not begin to know. Vast research would be necessary to present anything resembling a fair depiction, and the first equipment necessary to an honest researcher is the willingness to say, "I know very little, and the little I think I know may prove to be otherwise."

But stray clues present themselves—such as that there is a clear-cut dichotomy in the ranks of the Bar between Prosecution-men and Defence-men; that for a newcomer it is much easier to scratch a living in Prosecution; that the vast majority of appointments to the Bench are made from the ranks of Prosecutors, who, unlike the Defenders, have never consorted with criminals; and that, therefore, there are many Judges who have never met or spoken to a criminal except across the space between Bench and Dock.

Further clues at random might be that some over-harsh sentences have turned first-offenders into second-offenders, and second-offenders into recidivists. An equal and opposite clue might be said to be that over-lenient sentences have achieved the same result.

On this the last word has already been said by Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, when he observed: "Fill the seats of justice

with good men, but not so absolute in goodness as to forget what human frailty is."

With a new Penal Reform Act promised, it may seem a little late in the day to make this essay for a film. But, however good the new Act may be, it is too early to hope that it may be perfect, so perhaps there still remains room.

Of the obstructions that may be envisaged, I would not regard that of finance as likely: just as it is notorious that water comes to the mill, so will capital to the profits.

The second obstruction—of censorship on the grounds of Public Policy—would depend on the private conscience of the Home Secretary then in office.

The third obstruction would be that of obtaining the facilities for research. This—again—would largely be a matter for the Home Secretary. But, no matter what license he granted us, we would, armed even with Carte Blanche, find ourselves Bêtes Noires and balked at every turn by the vested (I use the adjective in no narrow over-simplified Marxist sense) interests concerned.

But, if any entrepreneur cares to permit me to make that film, I can assure him that I have the proper sources of information available, subject to the guarantee that they shall be properly used.

• • •

SETH HOLT

THE QUESTION GIVES ME the shivers a bit. "A completely free hand" conjures up M. R. James and *The Beast with Five Fingers*. Facetiousness apart, though, I find myself temperamentally incapable of considering the project without the market and the limitations arising from the nature of that market. These limitations start with the choice of subject and continue right up to the finished product. These inhibiting factors, exhilarating and depressing by turns, I take to be the basic facts of life in a manic-depressive world. News that the formulae are changing is always welcome; but it often indicates a new attitude towards decoration rather than a revolution in architectural style. God knows, though, even that can be a relief.

I am not trying to evade the issue, but to answer the question conscientiously. I feel compelled to define what the question means to me personally. There are, of course, a lot of films one would like to make, some more "possible" than others. Some represent cats that it would be folly to let out of the bag. One subject very dear to me at the moment is called *Gratz*. It is a story written for the screen by J. P. Donleavy, author of *The Ginger Man*, though even readers of this novel will be little the wiser, and there is certainly not space to do justice to it here. There is an old saying in the industry that for a screen story to be good it must be possible to write it out on the back of an envelope. This can be done with *Gratz*, but (a) I am not the person to do it; and (b) I'd rather you see it on the screen. For me the ultimate ambition is—as the man says—the continued exercise of one's craft.

• • •

PAT JACKSON

A HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FIVE thousand pounds is all I need. This sum will not be found from the usual sources. I pin my hopes, therefore, on my weekly half-crown invest-

"A film about crime . . ." A scene from Robert Hamer's "*It Always Rains on Sunday*".



ment on the "treble chance". Having achieved my eight draws, I shall be off to the Rockies, to the centre of British Columbia, to reconstruct a true story that occurred in 1939. It was told to me by one of the people concerned, Rich Hobson, author of *Grass Beyond the Mountains*, and is about the efforts made to bring medical help to a rancher who developed double pneumonia while on a cattle drive in the wilds. His two partners, a relay of telephone operators, a bush pilot, a Mountie and a small-town doctor were among the people involved; and after prolonged efforts and setbacks—including a search for the area's only available supply of M and B—the invalid was finally flown safely out to hospital.

This story has not been made because it is a Western without a villain. It is a community story without a "star" part. It does not conform to the formula and so it will never be made, unless the "pools" pay for it.



JOHN KRISH

THE DECLINE OF BRITISH films is due to poor subjects—amongst other things. Weak producers aren't likely to film strong scripts, even if they had the judgment to recognise one. They have a living to make, and in a way I sympathise with them. But there are times when I dearly wish they were making something else that belongs in a can. Like Baked Beans. They're cheap, and the appetite for them doesn't change much—and they don't need much effort to swallow.

I care a great deal about films, but to be asked for my personal choice with all freedoms guaranteed is an impossible question—for me. By nature I am not a dreamer, and I don't believe that the completely free hand will always bring about better pictures. It hasn't in the past. I set my sights seemingly a little lower—but on more fertile ground.

If I had the choice, I would mainly make films not for adults, but for the international audience of children: for as a parent, I believe the responsibilities to one's own children are as to all children.

Writing for and directing child actors who are real children (not cute gnomes) can be wholly satisfying. Bringing them to grips with the particular situation in the script (not treating it all as a lovely game), seeing them concentrate and listen and try to succeed, is stimulating and exhausting—and that is just what work should be.

Now I don't want to theorise about The Child Audience, because to me an audience isn't a lot of "thems", but individuals. And the child at the pictures is one aspect of oneself. The kind of film I should like to make for this child would be similar to the one I made called *The Salvage Gang*. This takes a realistic situation and treats it with comedy, so that most of the laughs are not gained at anyone's expense but come from the feeling and affection the child in the stalls has for the child on the screen.

Over the past few years, I have sat with and watched the Saturday morning audience on quite a few occasions. In my experience, the child wants value for money. He will pay attention—if the film is good enough for him. He will criticise it in his individual way—never considering whether it is fashionable to like something or dislike it. He is absolutely direct in what he thinks about the film—and



London children in John Krish's "The Salvage Gang".

being a realist that appeals to me enormously.

If the child is given the best when he goes to the pictures, then he will continue to go all his life. If, as it seems, we are now coming to a period of better subjects (although I note with regret that hardly one is an original screenplay), then I'd like to have some part in making sure that these better pictures are going to have a better audience.



JACK LEE

THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND THE TALL, that is what I want to make. But I'm not going to.

I want to make it because it is powerful drama yet has something to say. It is about man's inhumanity to man, but nevertheless it breathes with true humanity. It is a war story but it makes a real comment on war and on those who are involved in fighting it.

I am moved by it because it is about a group of ordinary, recognisable men, very real people all of them. Yet the story is highly distilled drama, a single simple situation faithfully developed and the inevitability of the tragic end not shirked. This is my personal choice of drama, ordinary people in a most "un-ordinary" situation.

As a man I feel with the men in the story because they come from the same social background as myself. And the story's attitude to war, internationalism and racialism stirs me to compassion. As a film director the story would give me that most urgent, and rarest inspiration, satisfaction.

At the time of the last crisis in the British film industry Richard Winnington said to me, "The thing to do is to survive and every now and then you will have an opportunity to make a good film." In the years since he gave me that advice I have sometimes made films of my own choice, sometimes not. And sometimes I have refused to make a film which, in order to live, prudence has urged me to accept.

Every now and then a story comes along that reaches out to a director—that stirs him deeply. *The Long and the Short and the Tall* has done this to me. Alas!, for me, to others also. For I am not going to film it. Someone, who has been able to command £30,000 for the rights, will do it instead. He has envious good wishes.

But there is this comfort. The competition to buy the film rights of Willis Hall's play is a sign of the regrowth of virility in the British cinema. It is also a sign of the paucity of good stories. Directors, actors, producers want stories, good stories. I don't want to make just a film, I want to make a *good* film. Because that is the whole point of survival.

TONY RICHARDSON

I HAVE BEEN VERY lucky in the cinema so far. The film of *Look Back in Anger* was produced by Woodfall Films, a company controlled by Harry Saltzman, an American producer, John Osborne and myself. Because of this backing I had complete freedom as a director. Consequently I was able to surround myself with a crew of technicians who had largely my own ideas, enthusiasms and aims.

In the next two years I plan personally to make at least three more films—*The Entertainer*, *Taste of Honey* and *City of Spades*—under similar conditions; and the company hopes to produce other films with different directors. None of these films is based on conventional material. Their tone, their attitudes, and in certain cases their subjects, are all breaking new ground. I don't, however, anticipate tremendous difficulties in setting up any of these productions. Naturally there will be resistances, as there always are to anything new, but if we have any success at all these resistances can be overcome. They are normal—and, I suppose, fair with any industry (whether it is capitalist or state-controlled) where so much is at stake financially . . . Certainly, of course, there is more opposition to certain social issues than to others. I expect to meet some of this over *City of Spades*. It is a frightening and disturbing comment on British democracy that certain institutions—the monarchy, the army, the church, the public school, the prisons, the police—are guarded from any candid presentation with as hard and tough an iron curtain as the Russian bloc has ever imposed. In this there is a complete contrast with the American cinema, which has never, however much it may have distorted them, shirked the issues.

There is, however, another Establishment more insidious than that of Pall Mall or St. James's. The establishment within the industry as a whole. This is a clinging to the easiest and most conventional ways of doing things. It extends into every department with a mollusc-like tenacity. The resistance to new ideas, new subjects, new attitudes is part of it; but it also manifests itself in a thousand tiny technical details of every phase of production. It springs in the end, of course, from economic pressure at the top. What is so disheartening about the British cinema is that few of the producers have any sort of convictions at all, not even determinedly commercial ones. Behind all their actions and decisions is a timidity which leads to a falling between every stool, so that their products are totally without vitality. This caution, this refusal to risk the little more for the extra quality, has permeated the whole structure below them, for always in the background is the threat, the fear of dismissal.

This is a permanent revolution that we all have to fight. That is why it is so important to any director to have around him a crew who would always go to the barricades over every detail. The falseness, the stereotypedness, the stale-

ness of British films is due to a refusal to approach a subject, the shooting of a scene, the use of a location, the design of sets, the casting of a small part, in a fresh and new way. There is constantly a premium on "this was the way it was done last time," rather than on "this is the way it has never been done."

But if we are to have the right sort of freedom to experiment, which is the only way any art can be kept alive, we have got to be able to try to do things more cheaply. So long as there are the extremes of profit and loss, so long will there be this constant urge to play safe. Production in this country has got to be reduced so that a number of films can be made much more cheaply . . . Only then can the economic blackmail be reduced and imagination really freed. That, however, is for the future. In the meantime there are plenty of signs of a new breakthrough, and it gives us all a challenging opportunity to sustain it.

PAUL ROTH

YOURS IS A CRUELLY UNFAIR question because one knows that it is a million-to-one chance that the film would ever be made! Also, of the six British films named by you as being indicative that "the climate of opinion may be becoming slightly more open," you fail to say that at least three of them owe, or will owe, their realisation to American finance.

However, in accepting your challenge, I shall also be unfair. Dividing my time as I do between making what are called documentaries and what are called features, I reserve the right to name two subjects, one in either category.

All things being equal, as a feature I should like to direct a film about Michael Collins, based on Frank O'Connor's biography *The Big Fellow*. I should co-script with that author (with whom I have discussed it) of so many superb short stories, whose dialogue is wholly realistic and of the people, and whose knowledge of the main character and events of the period—1916 to 1922—is unique. Why Mike Collins? Because he represents a dynamic personality who believed utterly in the freedom of his country, who had immense courage and honesty but was not by any means all-hero, and, above all, was a man of the people. One actor only can I name for the role—Marlon Brando, who has an uncanny likeness to Collins. The subject invites many problems—the attitude of the British censor to an anti-Black and Tan picture, the attitude of many people still living who took part in the events of the period (de Valera *et al.*), quite apart from the cost of the crowd scenes. I must add that I should not like to embark on such a picture without the collaboration of Wolfgang Suschitzky and Tony Inglis, who respectively photographed and designed my two feature films, and who know and love Ireland as I do.

If a documentary, then I should choose a film devoted to the contribution which the peaceful uses of nuclear energy can make to the future betterment of all mankind, without distinction. I scripted this subject as "The Power of Peace" for the United Nations in 1956, but for reasons I have never been told it was decided not to proceed with the making of the film, although the script was found acceptable at the time and the money had been allocated for its production. I should still like to make it because it is a theme of vast international importance.



"We Are the Lambeth Boys". Sponsored by the Ford Motor Company, and directed by Karel Reisz, this documentary about members of a London youth club was shown in the recent Free Cinema programme at the National Film Theatre. Photograph by Frank Herrmann.

In the Picture

Censored

JOHN GILLETT writes: With the current controversy over *Lolita* and the Lord Chamberlain's relaxation of the ban on homosexual subjects in mind, the audience at the January lecture by Mr. John Trevelyan, Secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, at the National Film Theatre, were clearly seeking some sign that concessions might be forthcoming on the film front. Although he declared that "we are passing things now that we wouldn't have done years ago," and stressed the difficulty of ensuring that adult films are seen by the *right* audiences, several forceful questioners made it clear that they considered the Board had no right to deny adult, selective audiences the freedom to decide for themselves on certain films. Challenged on specific titles, Mr. Trevelyan gave the following information. On *Les Amants*: "No definite decision has yet been made, we might want a few cuts . . . certain intimacies are likely to embarrass ordinary cinema audiences (jeers and protests), not an immoral audience like this one (laughter). I think *Les Amants*

is quite a good film but not a particularly good one." On *I Want to Live*: "We have offered an 'X' certificate with some, but not very much, cutting in the gas chamber sequence. The impact of the film will not be lost. We have offered a certificate on those terms."

One questioner, referring to *Operation Teutonic Sword* and other banned East German documentaries, declared that the B.B.F.C. had denied the film-maker his right to make a free statement and, if necessary, defend himself. Mr. Trevelyan repeated his objection that *Teutonic Sword* attacked an individual without giving him the right to reply, adding that, "the taking of legal action is a difficult thing for some foreigners. I think our policy on these films is the right one. It seems to us to be expedient." Another questioner suggested that the film was banned as being "absolute political dynamite." Mr. Trevelyan denied that this had influenced their decision, stating that the clause about a country with which we had friendly relations was "quite a subsidiary one" (more audience murmurs).

When another questioner protested that under our censorship system works of art tending to criticise the Establishment were suppressed, Mr. Trevelyan professed no knowledge of the Establishment. After the expression had been defined, he challenged the speaker to name some banned titles, apart from Ivens' *Song of the Rivers*, which he had not seen (a voice: "They haven't been made yet.")

Not all Mr. Trevelyan's pronouncements produced equal controversy—most people would agree with his strictures against American films liable to encourage adolescent hooliganism. He also felt that the main censorship problem nowadays was excessive brutality and sadism, not sex. Nevertheless, if the meeting had continued for another ten minutes or so, the explosion which had been threatening all afternoon might have taken place.



Free Cinema: Robert Vas (centre) and Walter Lassally filming a street scene for "Refuge England." Tibor Molnar (left) plays the leading part, of a young refugee in London.

Hollywood Report

ALBERT JOHNSON writes: Perhaps no Hollywood producer is as concerned with maintaining the spirit of a novel in its transition to the screen as Jerry Wald. Apparently stung mildly by critical comments concerning his Faulkner amalgam *The Long Hot Summer*, Wald recently sent out copies of the novel *The Sound and the Fury* to film critics, along with a fairly lengthy comment about the need for changes in the characterisations during the adaptation from book to screenplay. "I do not believe any producer would deny that he has a certain responsibility toward any work of real and lasting literary merit brought to the screen by him," says Wald. "However, this responsibility does not lie only in the direction of being as literally faithful to the original as possible . . ." *The Sound and the Fury*, which will receive its world premiere this Spring, presents Margaret Leighton in her first Hollywood part, encountering America's deep South with the unswerving candour of other British actresses whose initial encounters with Hollywood have also been on various fictional levels of that involved society.

Betty Comden and Adolph Green, after a triumphant two-person revue in New York, have arrived in Hollywood to adapt their stage musical *The Bells are Ringing* for the screen. It will, as on the stage, be a vehicle for Judy Holliday, who began her career as a singing comedienne years ago in a night club act with Comden and Green. Arthur Freed produces, Vincente Minnelli will direct, and Dean Martin has been signed to play the male lead.

George Cukor continues to experiment with the Italian mood. He has begun directing Sophia Loren's new vehicle at Paramount, and the material sounds promising: a theatrical troupe touring the American West during the 1870's. The cast includes Anthony Quinn, Eileen Heckart and Margaret O'Brien and the film will be shot almost entirely on location and in colour.

Perhaps the most interesting project from the West Coast studios at the present time, however, is an independent production—the first feature to be produced and directed by Terry and Denis Sanders, whose short *A Time Out of War* won the Richard Winnington Memorial Award. Called *Crime and Punishment—U.S.A.*, the film is another interpretation of Dostoevsky's novel, contemporary in milieu and set among the frenetic beach towns of Southern California.

George Hamilton and Mary Murphy in "Crime and Punishment—U.S.A."

Bergman's New Film

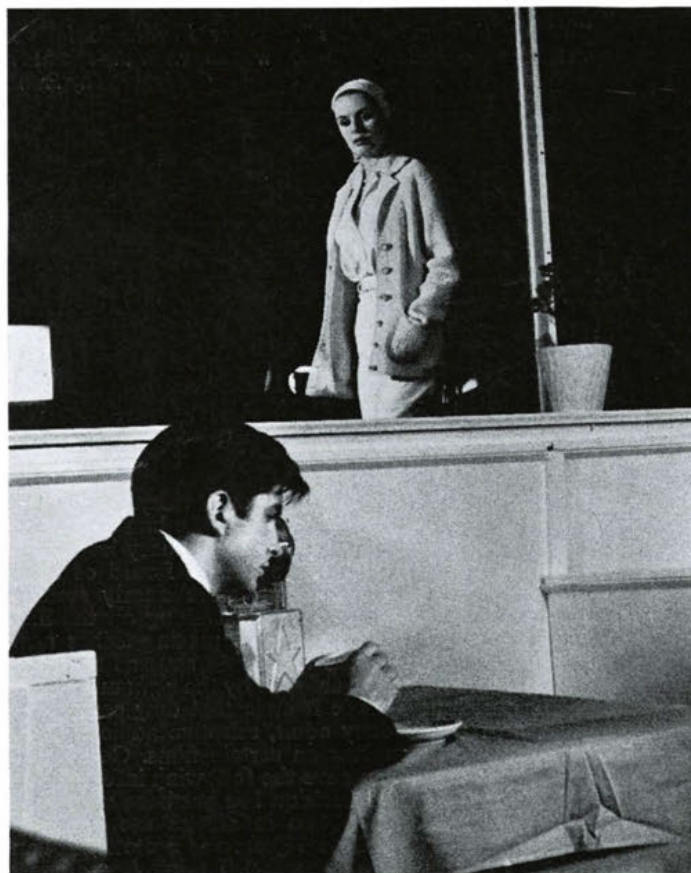
ERIK ULRICHSEN writes: The story of Ingmar Bergman's *Ansiktet* (*The Face*) is a strange one. In the middle of the 19th century Albert Emanuel Vogler, a mesmerist, is travelling by coach to Stockholm, accompanied by his assistants. When the suspect company arrives in Stockholm, it is more or less held prisoner in a rich man's house. Vogler is humiliated by a rationalist doctor and others, but does not answer. He claims to be dumb; his face is Christ-like, and he seems to suffer on behalf of mankind. But Bergman tears the mask off his face. The beard disappears, the man speaks, and we see a performer, an impostor. Or do we . . . ? In the end Vogler has his revenge on his tormentors. In a horror sequence he scares his rationalist opponent, and the last shots show him honoured by a summons from the King.

Bergman is here continuing his dialogue on faith and doubt from *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*, while he identifies himself (as in *Sawdust and Tinsel*) with the superficially worthless entertainer. For if everything is not clear in *Ansiktet*, it is at least apparent that the tormented, searching Vogler stands for something positive, even though he is exposed as a trickster. Perhaps Bergman intends a paradoxical allegory on faith: we see that there is nothing in Vogler, and yet, and yet . . . But in this case the horror sequence and the visit to the King emerge as too insignificant. Among the players, Naima Wifstrand is marvellous as an old witch in Vogler's company.

In Denmark, three new projects are worth comment. The documentary director Hagen Hasselbach is making his first feature, a crazy comedy; the producer-director Johan Jacobsen's new film is an experiment with only three characters; and a relatively new company, Film Forum, plans a film in several episodes, to be written and directed by different (mostly younger) talents.

Paris Notes

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: There is considerable uncertainty in French film circles at present, following the coming into effect of the European Common Market. M. Pinay, the Finance Minister, would like to see the French cinema entirely self-



supporting; M. Soustelle, as Minister of Information, has on the other hand promised trade representatives that he will do everything he can to ensure the continuation of the Loi d'Aide, without which the French industry might well have difficulty in surviving. Cinema affairs will soon be the responsibility of the Minister of Culture, M. André Malraux, and it can be hoped that he will be concerned to support the interests of the film-makers.

One result of this uncertainty has been a distinct slackening of activity in the studios. Producers are hesitant about involving themselves in costly large-scale productions, and there is some talk of limiting stars' salaries. Perhaps we are coming to the end of the era of super-stars such as Brigitte Bardot and Martine Carol. But the extraordinary success of films like *Et Dieu créa la Femme* and *Les Tricheurs* (whatever one thinks of their artistic quality) has resulted in a fashionable demand both for young actors and young directors. Claude Chabrol, whose second film *Les Cousins* has just opened in Paris, has been approached by a major company, Franco-London Film, to shoot a picture in Italy, on a restricted budget and with Zizi Jeanmaire. François Truffaut is preparing a second feature, *Temps Chauds*, with Bernadette Lafont, who played in his short *Les Mistons*. Two of the best-known Paris critics are also planning feature productions: Ado Kyrrou, the prophet of 'l'amour fou', will probably work in Belgium; Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, editor of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, is selecting locations for *Faux Frères*, scripted by himself and set in a house of rococo splendour in the Pyrenees. Alexandre Astruc and Françoise Sagan are collaborating on *Le Couteau dans la Plaie*, a project which they had to abandon two years ago, before producers discovered their present enthusiasm for youth. The 1959 version of Choderlos de Laclos' novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, scripted in collaboration by Roger Vailland (author of the novel *La Loi*) and the director Roger Vadim, will probably belong rather to the classic tradition of French erotic cinema. One way and another, some fresh air is blowing through the tottering structures of our industry.

London Prospect

THE WEST END'S first post-war cinema, the Columbia in Shaftesbury Avenue, has moved easily into the contemporary entertainment pattern. It is showing MGM's *Gigi* in theatre conditions, at something approaching theatre prices, and for an extended run. The cinema itself, underneath the Egg Marketing Board's substantial new headquarters, is a 730-seater, with an auditorium achieving a neat balance between depth and width. Decor is plainly functional, the impression being of white, black and blue, with colour used in solid strips and blocks. If the general style looks rather cautiously contemporary, espresso bar fripperies have been avoided; and as far as equipment goes, the new cinema is ready for any system. *Gigi* is the first film shown in these conditions which does not rely on length or width of screen. It opened in a glare of publicity; and it will be interesting to see how this long-run experiment works out.

FOUR BRITISH FEATURE directors, Basil Dearden, William Fairchild, Don Chaffey and Compton Bennett, are currently splitting 39 television films between them. The series is *The Four Just Men*, loosely adapted from Edgar Wallace and produced by Sapphire, the company behind *Robin Hood*. Vittorio de Sica, Dan Dailey and Richard Conte are cast with Jack Hawkins, whose part has been adapted to that of an Independent M.P. with a house on the river and a boat handy for secret escapades. This venture in international casting is slightly less remarkable than it appears, since the four men communicate mainly by telephone and pursue their adventures separately. But the production shows the lure of television. Only a "block-buster" film could expect to unite four stars of this weight. For television, they are working on the usual non-stop basis of one 30-minute episode every five shooting days.

ONCE AGAIN, THE National Film Theatre is turning its attention to a national industry—this time Sweden. From the end of March to the middle of July, about 20 representative Swedish films ranging from the early 1940's to the present will be shown. Among the directors, Sucksdorff, Ekman, Mattsson and Henrikson are represented by a film each; Sjöberg and Molander will have six between them, including the latter's version of Kaj Munk's famous play *The Word*. Most important of all, the season will yield the first opportunity to survey Ingmar



The mesmerist and his troupe in Bergman's "The Face".

Bergman's career in all its phases. Some ten Bergman films have been chosen, ranging from the early *Hamnstad* and important "middle period" works like *Prison* and *Thirst* to more recent sophisticated comedies featuring the director's brilliant and versatile "stock" company.

Rotha and the Abbey

USING THE CHARRED shell of Dublin's Abbey Theatre as a location, Paul Rotha is directing a film which is a tribute to this famous theatre, its plays and players. The Abbey first opened in 1904 under the directorship of Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats. Except for a week during the Rebellion in 1916, it never closed. The night after the fire in 1951, it still opened to the public in its tiny workshop, the Peacock Theatre, with *The Plough and the Stars*, although its wardrobe, prop-room, green-room and scenery had all been destroyed.

Plough Productions, a new Irish company formed by Jim O'Connor and Tom Hayes, have assembled the most distinguished cast of Abbey players ever to appear in one film: all the actors in *Cradle of Genius* (the film will be called after Yeats's famous phrase) are either with the Abbey today in its temporary home at the Queen's Theatre, or worked with the theatre in the past. They include veterans like Barry Fitzgerald, Maureen Delany, May Craig (with the Abbey 42 years), Sheila Richards, Gabriel Fallon, Eileen Crowe and Padraic Colum (the playwright, actor and critic who was with the original group from which the Abbey stemmed), and such younger names as Siobhan McKenna, Cyril Cusack, Dennis O'Dea and Ria Mooney (the Abbey's present producer). A highspot in the film is Barry Fitzgerald's meeting with Sean O'Casey (filmed at the playwright's home in Devon), after more than thirty years of self-exile for O'Casey following the Abbey's rejection of his *The Silver Tassie*. From them we hear first-hand accounts of the riots with which Dublin greeted *The Plough and the Stars* in 1926.

Rotha describes his film as a 'document of people' rather than a documentary. Aiming at complete spontaneity, he worked from no preconceived script, only a continuity line; no dialogue was written in advance, except for a broad outline to avoid duplication. The sparse narration will be written and spoken by Frank O'Connor. Photography is by Wolfgang Suschitsky and production design by Tony Inglis, both of whom worked on *No Resting Place* and *Cat and Mouse*. The film is designed for TV distribution in the United States and Britain, followed by a long life in the non-theatrical field.



**FROM
A**

GAVIN LAMBERT

**HOLLYWOOD
NOTEBOOK**



These extracts from a notebook begun in 1956 have been edited and sometimes rearranged for the sake of continuity.

Inside MGM

20TH CENTURY-FOX IS the country club—office buildings, sound stages, exterior sets, scene-docks and oil derricks planted at random in what the real estate agency would call a “gracious natural setting”; but Metro is the walled city. Bleak yet pompous, the Irving Thalberg Memorial Building guards the entrance to a location that would be perfect for a film of Kafka’s *The Castle*. Administrative blocks and sound stages form a dull grey, rather sinister huddle. You can get lost in a maze of narrow intersecting alleyways. And today, reinforcing the Kafka impression, there’s actually a Surveyor—I came upon him and his theodolite in a small open courtyard.

The stages are mainly empty. So far as I know, only *Party Girl* and an independent quickie are shooting just now. Footfalls echo in the empty alleyways. A black limousine parked outside Stage 23. A padded door marked 11A opens, a well-dressed executive-looking group comes out, then disappears across the alley through another padded door. The man in the centre, briefly glimpsed, is Hitchcock. It’s the kind of moment he chooses for a walk-on in one of his own pictures.

The quickie company breaks for lunch and heads for the commissary. How can you tell quickie companies? By a sort of featureless anonymity about them; faces a bit dour and tight-lipped, no one you recognise; one unnatural blonde; and they’re always in a hurry. They enter a commissary half-filled with more anonymous groups. “Chatter” soundtrack, subdued light. Over in one corner, having lunch with another unknown face, I notice a woman in dark glasses. A plate of salad in front of her. She wears a loose knitted black sweater, black pants. Long, delicate, marvelous hands. She glances up at the quickie company, then goes on talking to her companion.

A minute later, *Party Girl* has broken for lunch and the company enters. The star is Robert Taylor. And the woman in dark glasses is Garbo. Twenty years ago they played together in *Camille*. They don’t greet each other. He sits down at the other end of the commissary. Separate tables . . .

Then and Now

I HEARD TODAY, TAYLOR wanted to speak to Garbo, but was afraid she mightn’t want him to. And Garbo, disconcerted, wondered afterwards why he never said “Hello.” That’s a sad little footnote, I suppose, to the life of a legend. But in that moment in the commissary there’s a striking image, an image of present dislocation. Those three separate groups—Garbo, Taylor and the quickie company—they might have been from one of those movies in which people are arbitrarily thrown together, sole survivors of the end of the world. Garbo, no longer of the movies; Taylor, durable star who goes on and on; and the quickie group, going from low-budget picture to low-budget picture every few weeks.

Producers are still trying to lure Garbo back; but I wonder if today a young Garbo would ever be taken up. Recently TV ran some of her films: *As You Desire Me*, *Anna Christie*, *Camille*, *Conquest*. Perhaps the most striking thing about them now is how Garbo incarnated a kind of

woman who has completely gone out of the movies—had gone out, already, in the ’thirties. Her Anna Christie is remarkable, but nothing to do with O’Neill’s waterfront. Like several of the great 30’s stars (Dietrich, Hepburn, Davis) she is deeply androgynous. This year’s actresses most strongly tipped for an Oscar, Susan Hayward as Barbara Graham and Elizabeth Taylor as Maggie the Cat, are worlds away. In fact, the coin has flipped over. The outstanding male stars of the 50’s (Clift, Brando, the late James Dean) have an equally androgynous appeal. But theirs is a quality strictly *de nos jours*—hesitant, drifting, confused. They remind you of something Lara, speaking about life after “the general upheaval,” says to Zhivago in Pasternak’s novel: “All that’s left is the naked human soul stripped to the last shred, for which nothing has changed—because it was always cold and shivering and reaching out to its nearest neighbour, as cold and lonely as itself.” But we identify those women of the 30’s with something much more withdrawn and self-contained: Garbo with the great tragic heroines of the 19th century, Dietrich with the remote, amused decadence of the 1920’s, Hepburn with an almost archaic high society.

Another example of changing worlds: compare a week of old movies on TV with a week of current ones in the theatres. Here’s a TV week: *King’s Row*, *Kitty Foyle*, *Rebecca*, *Story of Louis Pasteur*, *The Reckless Moment*, *My Darling Clementine*, *It’s Love I’m After*, *The Vanishing Virginian*. And a theatre week: *South Pacific*, *Windjammer*, *The Buccaneer*, *The Last Hurrah*, *Home Before Dark*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *I Want to Live*. Of the new pictures, only the last one is truly interesting; several are extremely dull; and only one notable director, John Ford, is represented—by a dreadful work. Nearly all the films on TV are highly seeable; their directors include Ophuls, Hitchcock, Ford, Borzage. I looked at *Kitty Foyle* again—sentimental, rather commonplace, but done with an attractive lack of pretentiousness and a direct concern with the characters. And today it’s exactly this kind of picture—“superior” popular entertainment in its time—which most likely wouldn’t be made.

Why? There’s a new phrase in the trade: *Desperation Picture*. This applies to something that is neither a blockbuster (*South Pacific*, etc.) nor a sensational quickie. In other words, to the in-between picture, costing around one million dollars, shot in black and white for the 1.85:1 screen, and without a Top-Ten Money Making Star. In the past, of course, many of Hollywood’s best films have been desperation pictures. When I asked Milestone how much *Of Mice and Men* cost, he told me \$650,000. Steinbeck gave him the rights on a percentage basis, because no one else wanted them. The top star, Burgess Meredith, was paid \$10,000; Betty Field, whom Milestone wanted but feared might be too expensive, asked for and got \$4,500. Over the years, the film has made a slow but noticeable profit. I said: “You wouldn’t be able to do a thing like that today.” Thinking I referred to the problem of increased costs, he disagreed. The budget would be a million or so now, but he could find actors as good as the ones he found in 1940 willing to work for an equivalent salary. “But who would back it?” I asked. And now he only shrugged . . . Then he said: “They’ve got so greedy. Once they used to be satisfied with a million dollar profit, but now they want to put in five million and get back fifteen or twenty.” He mentioned a new blockbuster that had just started shooting: *Horse*



' In " Tobacco Road " Nunnally Johnson the writer and Ford the director concentrated on the decaying old couple . . . '

Soldiers. The two stars, William Holden and John Wayne, were getting \$750,000 apiece—plus percentages. The director, Ford, was getting \$250,000—plus percentage.

There it is. Think big, or think in terms of a quick buck. Anything else is desperation.

A Crop of Desperation

LATELY, HOWEVER, THERE'S been a small crop of desperation pictures. They get by, I suppose, because they have an "angle"—inflammatory, specially alluring subject-matter of some kind. *I Want to Live* is a desperation picture, and will no doubt pay off because of the "notorious" Barbara Graham case and the gas chamber cadenzas. *God's Little Acre* and *The Defiant Ones* are also desperation, again with inflammatory subject-matter (and, in the first case, Erskine Caldwell's best-seller) working for them. *Home Before Dark*—which, unwisely I should say, cost almost two million dollars—is a desperation picture that doesn't know it.

I Want to Live is a quite important case, a film with a lot of faults and yet more exciting and substantial than anything else made here in months—perhaps longer. The main flaw stems from a split intention: Barbara Graham's guilt or innocence has finally nothing to do with the capital punishment problem. You could make a much stronger anti-capital punishment film in which an unmitigatedly guilty person goes to the gas chamber. (It's the same with all the anti-lynching films, in which the point was always made by showing the "wrong" person getting lynched. But lynching, like the death sentence, is either bad or it isn't.) Also, on the guilty or innocent question, *I Want to Live* withholds certain vital facts, such as why Barbara Graham's

husband refused to corroborate her alibi. And yet the picture makes a very strong, hard-to-forget impact—through its dramatic illustration of the meaningless barbarity of capital punishment, and also (equally powerful, I think) its show-up of police methods: the moral squalor of informers and the vice squad. In these sequences it demonstrates what a much superior picture, *Paths of Glory*, proved—that a *strong feeling* about something, ably dramatised, will give a film vitality and power. *I Want to Live* takes a stand on important issues, and this is no doubt why Camus was so impressed by it. Added to this, it has a sharp jazzy sense of milieu and surface behaviour: casual sex in dreary motels, shady bars around Hollywood Boulevard, jam-session-and-marihuana haunts, etc.

By contrast, *The Defiant Ones* reminds one of what James Baldwin called "everybody's protest novel." I can't remember offhand any "problem" picture about the negro question that doesn't schematise things to such an extent that you feel all the situations have been rigged, just to make a theoretical point, and not to tell you about life. "The wet eyes of the sentimentalist betray his aversion to experience . . ." Certainly there's been no film to compare with Baldwin's own *Notes of a Native Son* or *Go Tell it On the Mountain*, which simply tell in direct human terms what it feels like to be a negro in everyday American life. *The Defiant Ones* is rigged to the point of parody, and the acceptance of a "liberal" gesture in it is deeply depressing. The idea that if you're an escaping white convict, handcuffed on the run to a negro prisoner with the sheriff's bloodhounds after you, you may finally come to terms with him—this is as awful as anything in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

In the context of present-day Hollywood production,

though, the picture betrays something quite significant; some kind of absurd sensational gimmick is probably the necessary condition for a "sociological" picture to get made. (Like the *Madame Butterfly* mummery that keeps *Sayonara* going, or the geisha nonsense imposed on the story of Townsend Harris.) "Aversion to experience . . ." It's the sad fact of much Hollywood production today.

Compare *God's Little Acre* with *Tobacco Road*, both medium-budget pictures—made 17 years apart—from a Caldwell best-seller. The films have basically the same ingredients—grotesque, tragi-comic adventures of a poor white community in the Depression years. In *Tobacco Road*, Nunnally Johnson the writer and Ford the director concentrated on the decaying old couple, dispossessed at the end and led off to the workhouse: they were the film's actual and symbolic centre. *God's Little Acre* hardly refers its story to a social context, inserts a misleading optimistic note at the fade-out, and shifts its concentration to the erotic couple—Tina Louise and Aldo Ray, all bursting cleavage and sweating naked chest. At the time Gene Tierney, who represented only a fringe sexual episode, seemed to strike a false note in Ford's picture; but she's a marvel of authenticity beside *God's Little Acre's* busty mannequin-like heroine. The differences run through and through, from details like the community folk hymn accompaniment to *Tobacco Road* and the raucous pseudo-jazz score of *God's Little Acre*, to the vital over-all disparity in tone. By emphasising their naiveté and ignorance, Ford commented on his characters, achieving a double-level effect—zestful and spontaneous to themselves, they appeared doomed and extraordinary to us. *God's Little Acre* presents them "straight"—only in the episodes with the albino, due to an excellent performance, does it approach commentary—with a kind of pedestrian naturalism. In the one case, the result is a humorous and poetic study; in the other, a sensationalised freak show. Eccentricity, squalor and hot-breath sex have become merely titillating factors, not aspects of human life to be explored and interpreted.

Coming out of a Blockbuster

COMING OUT OF A BLOCKBUSTER is as bad as waking up with a hangover. And there's no pleasure to look back on. The blockbuster isn't just a picture with physical bloat, unless it's dedicated to showing off yet another new process; it has the lure of a Broadway hit or a best-seller behind it, and one or more Top Money-Making Stars. It runs 2-2½ hours, usually in CinemaScope and colour; it has lavish backgrounds which become foregrounds, and there's a widely advertised set-piece, battle scene, sex scene, bullfight, elephant stampede, etc. It doesn't really matter who directs a blockbuster—you'll find no personal style. It doesn't seem to matter who writes it—the dialogue is mainly reminiscent of subtitles in silent pictures and the characters are strip cartoon. The total effect is traumatic: a jumble of titles (*A Certain Smile*, *The Young Lions*, *Sayonara*, *Bonjour Tristesse*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Barbarian and the Geisha*, *Island in the Sun*, *The Sun Also Rises*), of stars wandering around like displaced persons (that extraordinary group supposed to be writers in *The Sun Also Rises*, John Wayne as Townsend Harris and Charlton Heston as Moses), of endless travelogues of the French Riviera and Japan . . . In retrospect, the blockbuster period will surely appear as Hollywood's most spectacularly vacant and dull. And not one of these pictures seems like a movie.

. . . . "God's Little Acre" shifts its concentration to the erotic couple—Tina Louise and Aldo Ray, all bursting cleavage and sweating naked chest."

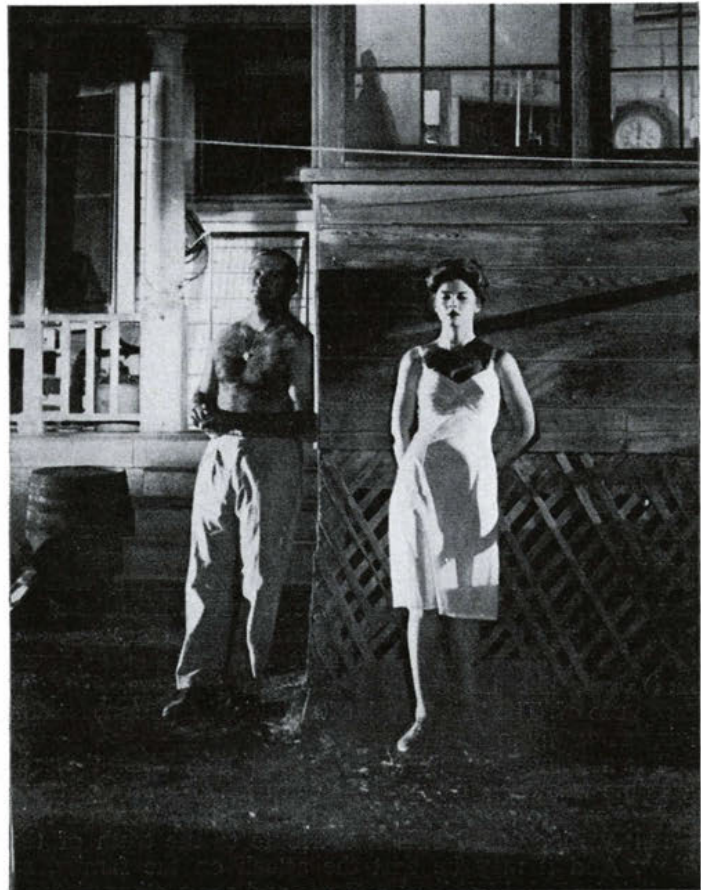
Hot Car Girls and Party Crashers

ON THE OTHER HAND, some of the teenage quickies can be recommended. The grounds are simple and basic: there's a breath of life in them, a fairly accurate account of contemporary tribal rites and customs, and the relief of looking at young people instead of old stars pretending to be young. The motives of these pictures are honestly unserious—it's only when they affect moral concern, in fact, that they become boring.

I saw two pictures, *Hot Car Girl* and *Cry Baby Killer*, on a double bill at a local theatre specialising in these and science-fiction quickies. The drama starts with the audience, mainly kids and teenagers. Quite a few Lolitas among the girls, giggling profusely in skintight clothes, bright lipstick and high heels. Solitary, rather sullen-looking youths in levis and sweatshirts. A fortyish woman by herself—tall, ravaged, in trousers, with enormous hoop earrings, she munches away at popcorn. Another solitary lady, older and more respectable-looking, in a hat. A middle-aged man in a raincoat, who never wakes up. And some four or five-year-olds who quickly get restless, toddle off after the first reel, are pursued by their Lolita-sisters, howl, threaten and are placated with chocolate mints.

Cry Baby Killer is an awkward, amateurish production with a compelling situation. A high school boy goes berserk one day with a gun, kills people, then holes up in the back room behind a restaurant—with a woman, her baby and a negro janitor as hostages. Outside, while the police try to wheedle and scare him out, a crowd forms; a TV camera covers events; the boy's parents arrive; the parent of a victim arrives; and the killer's girl waits in the café. A sort of juvenile *Fourteen Hours*, in fact.

The killer himself looks like an uncaricatured version of Jerry Lewis. He is clearly infantile, but dangerous. He



doesn't know why he's doing it. At one moment the woman with the baby breaks down and screams at him—"Degenerate! Filthy, filthy degenerate!" He doesn't get angry; it hardly impinges on him. Later, when the baby starts crying for food, he is infuriated—then agrees to let the police send a bottle of milk on a long pole through the window. He has phrases like "I've got to think things over" and "I'm not ready to die yet."

There is no point of view; nor is the whole incident repulsively sensationalised. At the end, the police officer confesses himself baffled by today's young delinquents; the parents can't imagine why Jimmy should go and do a thing like that; the girl, suspected and then cleared of being a ruthless good-timer, has no idea either. Everybody is as baffled as Jimmy, whom the audience seemed to take for granted. His infantile outbursts gained a few laughs, but most people were genuinely shocked when it looked for a moment as if the police were going to blast their way in, unaware that he'd finally decided to surrender.

A line of dialogue from a bystander in the crowd—"Teenagers! We never had them when I was a kid!"—earned loud applause.

Hot Car Girl is equally low-budget, but rather better made, written and acted. A "nice" girl falls for a boy who's the leader of a teenage gang that steals radios, wheel-hubs and other parts from cars, then sells them to a shady dealer. The gang's favourite recreation centre is a joint called the "Country Line Club", where they jive, neck and play the pin-tables. The beverages are non-alcoholic, but the "Orange Special" is secretly spiked. One day the boy and the nice girl go out for a drive; he gives chase to a sports car driven by a young rich girl—though the nice girl begs him not to. A cop chases both cars. Accident: the rich girl inadvertently causes the death of the cop. The boy gets away—but now he's wanted by the police and gets deeper into crime. Murder of the rich girl to stop her identifying him, and so on. The nice girl, his unwilling, sobbing accomplice, finally sees him peppered with police bullets in a mountain hide-out. Before he dies, he explains to her that when he was a kid, a cop beat him up. This turned him into a rebellious cop-hater. The girl repeats this explanation to the police chief, who admits that such things occasionally happen. The girl herself is analysed as suffering from "insecurity": her father died, leaving her mother without money, and at this unsettling moment her boy-friend came into the picture.

Mixed-up youth, in fact, is no longer explained in terms of *Rebel Without a Cause*. It's not really "explained" at all; the summing-up dialogues are bumbling and tentative. But the anti-family line, as such, is out. The cry baby killer had quite decent, sensible parents; the nice girl's mother in *Hot Car Girl* seems amiable and tolerant; we don't see the families of the other gang members. The rest of the hot car gang, incidentally, are shocked by what the boy does, and co-operate with the police. A little theft, they say, is taken for granted; but murder—that's different. The implicit assumption is that any teenager who's not a complete square will find himself to some extent outside the law. Everyone's a rebel up to a point, living for the moment, and can't look beyond himself. You have the impression that any teenage gang is a kind of open secret society, from which the adult world is rigorously excluded; parents are there to have breakfast with and say goodnight to; and an occasional individual, like the shady car-dealer, is contemptuously made use of. The "nice" girl, after initial hesitation, is soon lying smoothly to her mother.

The audience seems to share this attitude. When the programme was over, it was difficult to imagine any of them going home to a family supper. Perhaps they went off to a Country Line Club. This is a tribute to the truth of the films. And it may be that the attack on the family, so explicit in *Rebel Without a Cause* and some other pictures

a few years ago, is now taken for granted—I mean, that no one questions the fact that parental authority *has* collapsed, and that teenagers' impatience, anger and contempt for the world of adults is the result of growing up without a sense of direction.

Certainly in *The Party Crashers*, where more family life is shown, the attitude towards parents is fairly derisive. The hero is called Twig, and he heads a juvenile gang who get their kicks out of crashing parties. His mother, glaringly unfaithful to her alcoholic husband, is seen leaving the house, dressed and painted up to the nines, with the announcement that she's "going to the movies with cousin Phyllis." In a couple of scenes with Twig, her attitude is clearly incestuous. At the climax, Twig finds her in a motel bedroom with a lover, at a party his gang's just crashed. He tries to drag her out, they struggle on the terrace, and down a long flight of steps she falls—to die in hospital shortly afterwards. (The motel scene, incidentally, is excellent. The gang has crashed an adult party by mistake, and the adults, all having loud middle-class fun, suddenly turn sinister, force them to join the party. They find themselves trapped in a small crowded room and made to dance with giggling older women.) The death of Twig's mother leads to a rather anti-climactic scene in Juvenile Hall, where the gang has been rounded up and the parents anxiously await results...

None of the parents in this picture is admirable. Of the mothers, one is a tramp, another worried but ineffectual, a third self-importantly preoccupied with writing boring speeches she will deliver to the PTA. Of the fathers, one is a drunk, another a stick, a third clownish and unimaginative. All give their children sports cars and pocket-money. They seem quite out of touch with what's going on, then stunned by the disaster. The teenagers have no real enthusiasms beyond party crashing, dancing and sex. Once again a "nice" girl is attracted to a delinquent youth, and reduced to sobs and hysteria by the end of the experience. "He's an *animal!*" she breathes, half scared, half thrilled, when she first catches sight of Twig, and from the first moment is tempted to throw over her steady but dull boy-friend for him. This time her reason is not insecurity, just boredom with what she's got. All these lives are alarmingly sterile and dislocated, and the presentation of them non-committally realistic. The tramp mother, indeed, is played with immense verve (by Doris Dowling) and there's really no suggestion that her goings-on are in any way "responsible" for what happens to Twig—who even accepts the incest motif without flinching.

Amoral films? I don't think so. When they show rebellious violence as something enjoyable and alluring, as well as dangerously compulsive, they are only being honest. After all, it's the way the characters get their kicks, and the films describe it, and the consequences. Slice of life films, rather; unclimbed and superficial, but with a genuine vitality.

The Creative Issue

CONVERSATION WITH AN ENGLISH screenwriter and playwright, Barre Lyndon, who's lived in California for a long while now. He asked me to give, in a word, the difference between the London theatre and Broadway. After thinking it over, I gave him "provincialism"—adding that it went for the movies, too. The essence of provincialism, after all, is that it's *narrow*; and since narrowness works against creative activity, it follows that the English attitude is basically unprofessional. Lyndon suggested that there might be a connection between this attitude and the English affection for understatement, which is really false modesty. He mentioned the public school code—you knock up a 100 at cricket, then shrug your shoulders and say, "It's nothing, really." If you mention it took a lot of work and skill, you're



"Growing up without a sense of direction . . ." Two scenes from "Cry Baby Killer".

bragging. Somehow, it's bad form to let passionate effort show; in the same way a play or movie is often undertaken in England with a sort of amateurish casualness—"it's nothing, really." Same evening, I came across an article by Rebecca West, written for *The Bookman* in 1930, about a London production of a play by Ernst Toller. It begins: "The English dislike of the contemporary is sometimes thoroughly tiresome. Toller's *Hoppla! Wir Leben!* . . . was greatly disliked by the critics, who said it was dull and considered its theme remote. Yet actually it depicts in German terms a state of affairs which is one of the most interesting unresolved phases of English life." She goes on to point parallels between Toller's story of a German socialist and the problems of the British Labour Party then in power. But, "*The Sacred Flame*, which New York rejected in a fortnight, is cramming its theatre with audiences directed thither by critics who joyfully recognised a play that might have been written at the same time as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* . . ."

This struck me as another and broader way of making the same point. Which is illustrated, too, by the first British film I've seen in many months: *The Horse's Mouth*. It has virtues, but lacks the most important thing of all. It shows us Gully Jimson not as an artist with a burning desire to express his personal vision—and his life as an illustration of this desire—but as a kind of irresponsible "character" who happens to paint. The real zest and creative passion of Jimson just isn't there. I suspect this is because we're shown an unconventional character from the point of view of a fundamentally conventional one. Wildness is tamed, and becomes eccentricity. As for the contemporary scene, is it an accident that Jimson's band of helpers for the mural in the disused chapel become familiar Bloomsbury caricatures of twenty years ago? That no equivalent is found for Cary's juxtaposition in the novel of the destruction of Warsaw and the blasting of Jimson's mural? And that Jimson's final speech (in which he explains how, in spite of "that old, dirty dog, the world," his creative passion has kept triumphantly alive) is omitted?

"Creative passion . . ." About twelve years ago, James Agee remarked that when the cinema was economically healthy, the crassness and hostility of commerce to the artist could be a stimulus. But when it was economically sick, these same qualities made it almost impossible for an artist to work in movies unless he had a "murderous creative passion." Economic uncertainty has had a very bad effect

on Hollywood production, but if you examine *how* the few outstanding pictures of the last decade or so happened to be made, from *They Live By Night* through *Limelight* and *The Quiet Man* to *Paths of Glory*, you find it's exactly this "murderous creative passion" that's responsible. And elsewhere, haven't Buñuel and de Sica and Bresson and Tati and Wajda and Ingmar Bergman and Satyajit Ray and others needed it too? In fact, the best artists in movies have always needed it: they've all struggled against producers and censors, and sometimes critics, for the right to express their personal vision. Commerce or socialist realism or words like "commitment" are all challenges to the individuality of the artist. The marvellous things happen when Mr. Goldwyn or Mr. Surkov or critical jargon are ignored. Reading that symposium called "The Critical Issue" in a recent *SIGHT AND SOUND*, what really astonished me was that—in all the obituaries for the "failure" of Free Cinema—no one expressed pleasure in the creative passion that produced a handful of small but vital pictures which are the most important thing in British movies since Humphrey Jennings. The trouble is, they were being used to air a critical grievance. At the end of *The Horse's Mouth*, when Jimson's mural has been demolished, Nosy complains: "It's not fair. They're all against you." And Cary makes Jimson reply: "There you go, getting up a grievance. Which is about the worst mistake anyone can make, especially if he has one. Get rid of that sense of justice, Nosy, or you'll feel sorry for yourself, and then you'll soon be dead—blind and deaf and rotten . . ."

So, in this connection, to hell with what *SIGHT AND SOUND* was or is like; with whether audiences have become too "respectable" or not. This is grievance-mongering. If you want to know how someone can live in a state of extraordinary loneliness, cut off through lack of sympathy for what's happening around him, and yet after more than twenty years produce a work of great humanity, then read *Doctor Zhivago*. Not for political reasons: for total ones, as the testament of a nonconformist who went on living and creating, and avoided the fate of many of his contemporaries: "It was as if something abstract had crept into this face and made it colourless. As if a living human face had become an embodiment of a principle, the image of an idea . . . I realised that this had happened to him because he had handed himself over to a superior force, but a force that is deadening and pitiless and will not spare him in the end . . ."

„БЕЖИН ЛУГ“

eisenstein's bezhin meadow / JAY LEYDA



“Bezhin Meadow”: Eisenstein on location.

The release of Part Two of *IVAN THE TERRIBLE* and the recent screening in London of some unseen material for *QUE VIVA MEXICO!* reminds us of other films that Eisenstein did not complete. Of these the most important was *BEZHIN MEADOW*, a film that he began in 1935.

While Jay Leyda worked as assistant and still photographer on *BEZHIN MEADOW*, he kept a production diary, from which the extracts below have been taken for *SIGHT AND SOUND* before they appear in his history of Soviet films, *KINO*, announced by Allen and Unwin for publication this autumn. The only previous use of this document has been by Marie Seton for her biography of Eisenstein, where a few extracts were quoted.

BEZHIN MEADOW WILL BE recognised as the title of one of the short genre stories by Turgenev in the collection *A Sportsman's Notebook*. It tells how Turgenev, losing his way

while returning from one of his hunting hikes, stayed the night at a bonfire kept by boy horse-herders. The ghost stories they told each other to keep awake, revealing so much about the Russian peasant child of 1850, were recalled by Alexander Rzheshhevsky when he was commissioned by the Communist Youth League to write a scenario on the theme of the farm work of the Young Pioneers. So he went to live for two years in the village of Bezhin Meadow, to observe and record the contrast between the Russian peasant child as Turgenev knew him and as he is today.

He brought back a scenario vivid with new Soviet village life and the heroism of the Young Pioneers on the collective farms. The film's central figure of Stepok had his real counterpart in Pavlik Morozov, a boy whose work of guarding the harvest threatened the sabotage activities of his family, and who was killed by them. Eisenstein himself described his treatment of this story as “a film about

children and adults, for adults and children.”

CASTING

The hunt for actors was conducted on an enormous organised scale, which surprised no one. Eisenstein always began a film with an actor-selection larger than any other director here used. Two days a week, for four steady hours, those chosen by the assistants and the agencies were shot into his sight, five at a time. Extras for mass scenes were picked for the emotional content of the scene, as carefully as with the speaking parts.

Out of more than 2,000 children, the assistants picked 600. Eisenstein weeded this down to 200, and still the boy to play the hero hadn't been found . . . And then, in the next to last viewing of the children, Eisenstein saw Vitka—“He is Stepok.” He was a quiet 11-year-old, interested in mathematics but not in movies, the son of an army chauffeur, Kartashov. He seemed to have everything against him—his hair grew in the wrong way, insufficient pigmentation of the skin gave him great white blotches on face and neck, and at the test his voice grew stiff and dull . . . until he was told to ask us riddles, when he produced a clear, fine, almost compelling voice. Only Eisenstein saw at once (as everyone later saw) the positive characteristics: he expressed the role of Stepok not as an actor but as a child, a Young Pioneer. He got the job . . .

ARMAVIR

Scouts had meanwhile been looking for locations. It had been decided before they left that the real Bezhin Meadow could not be used, that a “synthetic” village would be composed, employing backgrounds from various places in the Soviet Union. To avoid confusion among his assistants, Eisenstein made a map of this synthetic Bezhin Meadow.

With the return of the scouts, a plan was agreed: Armavir for two weeks, to film mass scenes for the film's “Highway” episode, then Kharkov for about a month, to film all the acted scenes for this episode, with the help of the Kharkov tractor plant.

So, at six o'clock on the morning of June 15, a chartered plane carrying a group of seven and all our cameras and apparatus took off from Moscow airport and flew almost directly south. By four o'clock we found ourselves 1,500 kilometres from Moscow, in the Azov-Black Sea district, on the Stalin State Farm, the second largest *sovkhos* in the U.S.S.R. and so far uncontaminated by a kino expedition.

This fertile high valley and its river Kuban has witnessed the fighting, the fleeing, the embattled harvesting of successive human multitudes—waves of tribes from the east, nations from the south and the Russian Empire from the north, all leaving behind them children and funeral mounds. Here along the rushing, muddy Kuban marched the partisan armies of the Civil War, the “Iron Flood” that Serafimovich wrote about. And here, in 1935, Eisenstein filmed a different “iron flood”: the thousand workers of the *sovkhos* riding to the harvest.

Although three and sometimes four cameras filmed constantly, very few of the shots would appear on the screen just as they were taken. Although we had no sound equipment until we got to Kharkov, the finished sound was considered with each day's work. Eisenstein explained the mystery: “On the editing table this episode will be handled in the same way as a composer works on a fugue in four voices. The material we're filming here is only one of those voices. Most of it will be used for rear-projection and transparencies when the second voice will be worked out, with figures and close-ups in the foreground . . . The third and fourth voices (or themes, or motifs) are in sound—sound and speech.”

No possibilities of this first voice were neglected, even though Tisse (looking like the White Rabbit) had to climb

every morning into his hole dug under the road to film machinery passing over him in different combinations arranged the night before. We worked from six in the morning until seven at night, then washed hilariously before dinner at the little hotel and a conference on the day's achievements and the morrow's plans. “Well, have we come up to the record set during *Potemkin*, when 75 different shots were made in one day's filming on the steps?” . . . “No, but 45 on three cameras and a hand camera is still pretty good.” . . . “Not good enough! Don't let the old battleship shame us . . .”

Future work was not forgotten. One night we trooped out in trucks to see how fields of ripe grain look in the moonlight, for night filming that wouldn't take place for two months. And we used the marvellously filmable acres of grain to take some shots for the finale, when the body of the murdered Stepok is brought back to the village. These shots of pioneers saluting from their watch-towers in the fields as the body is carried past were our introduction to emotional film *cadres* as only Eisenstein could make them.

My last memory of Armavir was a realisation of the seriousness of our subject. We could not avoid some trampling down of the grain around these watch-towers. As our truck pulled out to move on to the next shot, we would look back and see the real pioneer guards of the harvest emerge and carefully prop up each bent stalk.

KHARKOV

Because this “Highway” episode represented the most difficult part of the film, Eisenstein chose it for the first to be filmed, so that the rest could be built around this accomplished climax. It occurred midway through the film, which covered a twenty-four hour action, from the morning of one day to the next, harvest day. (The highway itself was one of the repeated uses of a “road” symbol.) In this episode, four fugitive incendiarys, who have been forced out of their refuge in the village church, are being taken away under guard by two militiamen. They try to cut across the highway, along which peasants are moving to the harvesting camp. When the harvesters learn who these men are, they threaten violence; but the boy Stepok, stepping between the two groups, relaxes tension with a joke. The militiamen are able to proceed with their prisoners.

Bad weather held us up for two weeks, before we had our chance to start filming properly . . . One day, after a full day's filming, we rushed the four incendiarys to the Kharkov airport in order to film them under the wind of a propeller. I was mystified until Eisenstein showed me a new notation in the script. When the procession recognises the four, their indignation is expressed by hooting, shouting and whistling. The sound indicated in the script was to become less and less realistic, until all other sound was drowned out by the whistling, mounting to a volume where boat whistles and factory sirens took the place of the human voice. The sound track went so far into imagery that the picture had to keep up with it—so now the new notation read “the four under a high wind” and then “the four as if in a hurricane.” In his silent films Eisenstein constantly employed sound metaphors: now he was throwing the weight of his imagination into making the image as strong as the sound metaphor. After Stepok's joke, we were to see the fields, the sky and the trees throwing back the laughter of the crowd . . .

NIGHTS IN THE FOREST

In the spring, a field in a hollow near the Moscow Studio had been ploughed and sown (by Eisenstein, with proper ceremonies) for filming in the fall; and in this field, with its surrounding forest of silver birches overlooking the Moscow river, we spent cold nights from sunset to sunrise for three weeks. The only change in this life of hissing

blazing Jupiter carbons came when the few houses for the village street set were built at the other end of the field, and there we filmed in the daytime. The heavy rains that had hit Moscow hadn't left much of a filmable harvest in the carefully prepared field, so when wheat was needed it was supplied in neat, handy artificial rows from the property rooms of the studio.

The material for this filming was the episode called "Night Fires" and the events following the discovery of the fatally wounded Stepok—the chase after the four incendiaries, their capture, and Stepok's death at dawn.

Each night's shooting would begin with the mass scenes of the boys tearing along through the birch forest to head off the incendiaries. Turgenev's were: "bareheaded; in old fur capes they stride the most spirited nags and scurry along with merry cries and hooting and ringing laughter, swinging their arms and legs and leaping in the air." Ours were serious, furious at the inhuman crime (Stepok's murder) committed while they were so near, and tore along, whipping their horses and almost crying with desperation.

Behind the camera was as curious a picture as in front. Ranged along around the back of the camera were the group . . . and the guests: friends, relations, managers from all the studios, other directors (friends or disciples of Eisenstein—Kuleshov, Ermler, Savchenko, Barnet, Macheret, Trauberg, Esther Shub, the Vassilevs), French authors, English aesthetes, German émigrés, American tourists. Whenever Tisse picked up his camera and Eisenstein his candy-pink wand, to move to another spot in the fantastically-lit forest, the whole miscellaneous assemblage would move their auditorium (made up of two wicker chairs and twenty odd boxes), adjust themselves to the new pits and puddles, and stare at Eisenstein making next year's magic . . .

Each morning, to catch the first light in the sky before the sun itself appears, Stepok lay stretched out dead for the few minutes that the light allowed us. Turgenev again supplied the backdrop and the perfume: "Everything around us was perfectly still, as it is only still towards morning; all was sleeping the deep, unbroken sleep that comes towards daybreak. Already the fragrance in the air was fainter—once more a dew seems falling . . . How short are the nights in summer!" The chief of the *Politotdel*, sitting by Stepok, would turn to look at the boy's lightning dead face. And through the spluttering of the carbons and the barely heard directions of Eisenstein (his voice during filming was always the quietest of the whole group), the unit and guests began to forget that Stepok was Vitka and that he was not really dead . . .

NIGHTS IN THE STUDIO

The quietest and most choice time to film sound sequences was naturally the night shift, and our night-life continued in the studio. The first episode filmed here was that of Stepok's murder. The boy, having heard his father plotting with the incendiaries to burn the crop, goes at night to one of the watch-towers to stand guard over the harvest. He is punished by his father with a rifle shot in the back. Despite his wound, he starts to crawl towards the village to give warning. Then, hearing more shots, he turns in his tracks, totters back, and, half-unconscious, engages in a ghastly hand-to-hand contest with his frenzied father.

In this first studio sequence, Stepok has just been shot in the back and has fallen from the tower to the hillock of grass below, surrounded by the moonlit wheat. The scene is enclosed by a threatening sky. He lies there, half-conscious, not knowing who shot him. His father creeps up to look at his dead son's body. When he sees that Stepok is still alive, he takes the opportunity to gloat over how inevitably God, through his faithful agents, always punishes faithless sons. He forces Stepok to answer his maddening rhetorical ques-

tions, and as the first pains loosen Stepok becomes aware that it was his father who shot him.

As this sequence progresses, the things that happen in front of the camera grow less and less human. The speech of the father reveals a mind growing mad. The heroism of the boy is that peak of accomplishment of the impossible when a terrible energy surmounts all obstacles. The two lines reach their climax when the father, so wrapped in his chance to excuse himself before God and in his terror at being discovered, forgets to watch Stepok and the boy crawls away to give his warning. When the father (played by Zakhava, director of the Vakhtangov theatre) finds Stepok gone, his mind advances another step towards the edge of sanity and he begins frantically firing in all directions.

Every means was used to intensify this increasingly nightmare sequence of events. Zakhava's make-up emphasised those facial characteristics for which he was given the part. Nothing but his enormous beak-like nose and his glassy eyes could be seen over a short curly beard . . . Before each shot of the out-stretched figure of Stepok was filmed, each finger, each fold of his white blouse, each hair, was minutely arranged to give the desired effect. The compositions seen on the screen afterwards—triangular platform of the watch-tower, ghostly heads of wheat, the body of Stepok and the eyes of the father—left you in no doubt as to what effect was desired.

But the atmosphere during filming slackened occasionally. It had to slacken or we might all have gone mad too. Eisenstein and Vitka could see no reason for not making jokes, so the empty studios often heard the sound of laughter added to the unreal sounds of the rifle, the words of Zakhava, and the voice of the sound operator booming out of nothingness. Sometimes no amount of organisation of Vitka's daytime sleeping and no amount of coffee could keep him awake. Twice he went sound asleep while the cameras were going, and only the sound-cameraman in his booth detected it from the curious noises picked up by the microphone.

THE HUT

An Eisenstein sound film was bound to be visual-sound counterpoint: in his own words, the highest plane for the realisation of the conflict between optical and acoustical impulses. In another place, he said that the ideal form for the sound film is the monologue. In the "Family" episode of *Bezhin Meadow* both these ideals found their realisation. In this scene the father is taunted by the presence of the boy who has "betrayed" him and sets guards outside his door. His only outlet, being weak and not quite drunk enough for beating, is to attempt to goad the boy into making a move that can be answered by a blow. The dialogue for the scene was literally a monologue by the father; and (judging by the shooting) it was intended to edit the sequence as a conflict between the increasing hysteria of the father and the increasing calm and strength of Stepok, culminating in shrieking, drunken madness and Stepok's decision to leave home for ever.

You could see the back of Stepok's upright head and hear the new pitch of helpless fury that the sight of it aroused in the father. Sometimes this conflict was definitely broken up like this, sometimes it appeared in the same shot: Stepok's face with the father's face dancing around with pent-up brutality. Sometimes the break came in two visuals conveying the same side of the conflict but expressed in opposites—as in the shots where the father's hysterical fury was shown side by side with the silent, still and concentrated hate held by the grandmother for the boy. Here was the shattering of a conception into all its contained conflicts, to be re-expressed in a multitude of forms, making the sound

(Continued on page 105)

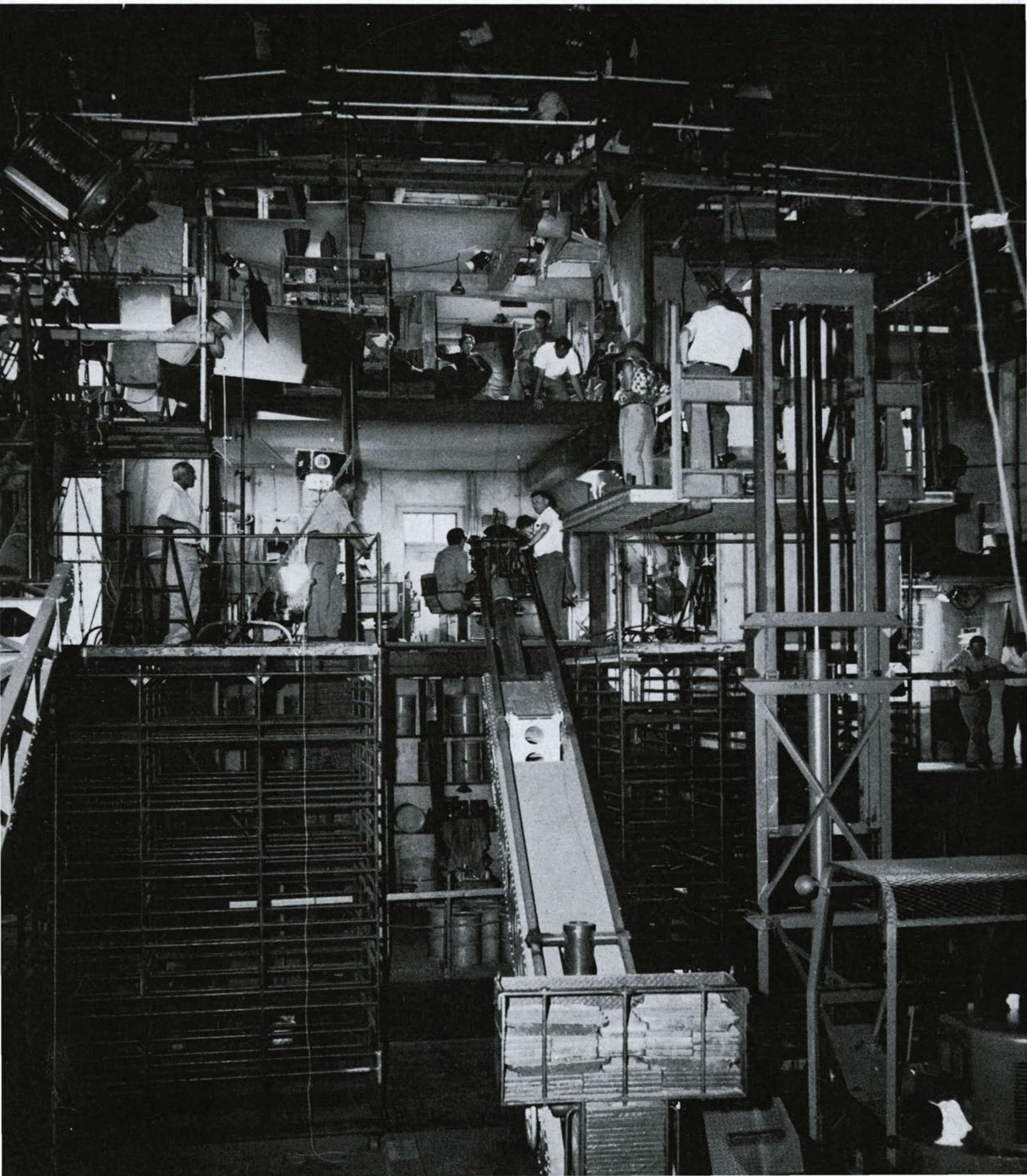


Stills from Eisenstein's unfinished *Bezhin Meadow* are rare. These were photographed by Jay Leyda, who was one of a team of apprentices on the production. Two other apprentices played roles in the film: upper right, Maslov, seen from the back, in the role of an incendiary; below centre, Igor Pavlenko as a militiaman. The photograph immediately above shows Eisenstein, Tisse and the crew filming outside Kharkov. The close-up, left, is of Vitka Kartashov, who played the chief part in the film.

Other still photographers will be interested to hear that for Eisenstein the ideal film still never duplicates a filmed composition; it should be, instead, a summing up of the group of compositions within a sequence.



Sounds from the



Westertoren

SOME TIME AGO, I had an opportunity to visit the set of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. As we stepped inside, out of Los Angeles' intense, eye-piercing sunlight, the three-storied set, a replica of the office building on the Prinsengracht canal, loomed before us. A maze of exposed rooms, cables, elevators, pulleys and cameras, it stood like some stripped skeleton from a bombed-out town, with searing lights illuminating portions of its inner chaos. At once, the building re-created in one's imagination Anne's own description of the restricted space in which she, her family and three others were forced to live for two and a half years. A covey of workmen, moving continuously on the upper floors, stacked ladders against the grey-smudged walls.

Roy Metzler, in charge of "foreign" publicity at 20th Century-Fox, was showing me around. "You know, an entire staff of people went over to Amsterdam and took pictures of the office building where the Franks lived—every little crack in the plaster," he said. "Anne's father, Otto Frank, came here a few weeks ago and he couldn't believe that the rooms hadn't been moved to the States. I think he only had one comment to make, about some spots on one of the walls." I asked whether Mr. Frank had met Millie Perkins, who plays Anne, and what he thought of her. "Of course she doesn't look like Anne Frank, but he thought she had the right quality, many of Anne's characteristics. He liked her shyness, too." Looking again at the set, he went on: "The whole building's on springs, so that in the bombing scenes you get something of the shaking effect. In fact, Stevens is such a stickler for proper reactions that he didn't tell them the entire set was going to drop several feet . . . you should have seen their faces!"

Behind us, a large photograph of Anne Frank smiled down over the set, and a small gallery of photographs of the Amsterdam hideaway and surrounding streets caught my attention. I did not see George Stevens for quite a time, until he emerged from the crowd of workmen above to watch the filming of a short sequence. Mr. Dussel (Ed Wynn) was being brought to the building: along a cobbled street three figures walked slowly through misty rain, spraying from pipes above their heads. Against the quiet their footsteps sounded, sloshily.

I talked briefly to Stevens during a pause after this scene, and at greater length to his son, George Stevens, Jr., the co-producer. Stevens said that he did not particularly like being director and producer, but felt so strongly about Anne Frank's story, its meaning for people all over the world, that it had been difficult to organise in cinematic terms. "It's a story that I'd like to do in a hundred different ways. There's so much of humanity in it." He mentioned Otto Frank's visit: "He couldn't hang around the set very long. It reminded him . . ."

George Stevens, Jr., had gained experience at the University of Southern California's cinema department and from several years' work in television. We sat and looked at film strips from *Anne Frank*, as Ed Wynn joked with a blond young actor dressed in a German soldier's uniform. Stevens, Jr., held the film up to the light as he spoke: "I think our major problem has been trying to bring the wide, horizontal images of CinemaScope under some sort of control. It's an absurd shape to work with, especially when you don't have colour to embellish your images. We had to think of the photography in so many perspectives—in terms first of the confinement of the Franks, then in terms of composing some reasonable close-ups, of making visually interesting groupings, of making the action cohesive. You see the set? Well, the difficulty lies in getting inside the darned thing and trying to bring about this kind of effect."

In Stevens' dressing room, his son showed me the direc-

tor's workbook and photographs on the production. Among them was a copy of the works of Frederick the Great, ornately bound. I opened one volume and read "Ex Libris, Adolf Hitler," inside the cover. It was one of Stevens' war relics taken from the ruins of Berchtesgaden. From a large photograph album, a series of stark faces and shrunken-jawed spectres looked back at me. "Those are war prisoners at Dachau," Stevens said. "My father was with the Signal Corps when they released those people." In one picture Stevens, in uniform, sat in a jeep called "The Toluca," looking solemnly at the buildings and barbed wire of Dachau . . . On the set, there was a yell for silence, and we went outside to watch.

At the top of the building, Millie Perkins and Richard Beymer (as Peter Van Daan) awaited a rehearsal. Joseph Schildkraut (the father) began to descend a narrow stairway very stealthily, a hammer in his hand, while Stevens sat nearby, speaking quietly to the actor during the action. "You've heard something in that room . . . but look around honestly . . . slower . . . slower. Quiet as a cat . . . just like a cat." Schildkraut descended further, out of my view. "Richard!" Stevens whispered, and Beymer sneaked down too, holding a wrench. "Millicent!" The girl followed, a red and white paper wreath in her hand, gazing below with curiosity. "Get ready," Stevens warned. "Now—duck!" and the two flattened themselves swiftly against the wall. "I like your timing, Richard, but you're taking a little too much time; and hide, Millie, be sure you hide!"

They went through the scene again. In the hush, one could suddenly feel the atmosphere of a European past, when in the world of Anne Frank an outside stairway symbolised all the mystery and danger of a world at war.

ALBERT JOHNSON

Story conference.



ANIMATED CINEMA



FOR MANY FILMGOERS throughout the world, the animated film still probably signifies one thing only: the Hollywood cartoon; more specifically, Walt Disney; more specifically still, Mickey Mouse. This is not really surprising: the American cartoon has had enormous commercial success and correspondingly widespread influence; and it was for years able to develop and perfect its techniques without encountering any real competition. Hollywood, in fact, taught cartoon technique to the world. Even in the first animated films of Jiri Trnka (*Animals and Brigands*, for instance, made in 1946), there are traces of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Often this American influence has been so strong as to inhibit the emergence of real national schools and styles. France's failure to establish herself in this field, for instance, is largely due to inability to break away from the elaborate, highly developed American cartoon technique and to look for more original and economical solutions. Other countries have set up their own animation studios (often state-controlled) but have yet to discover their authentic means of expression. Unable to shake off the prejudice that animated films are still essentially children's entertainment, the Soviet Union conforms to Hollywood canons, frittering away a Disney-like production power on an exhaustive series of talkative little moral fables. (A few lively productions by Migunov, Pastenchko and Diojkin illustrate, by contrast, the tedium of most of this too copious Soviet output.) Neither the Chinese animated cinema, which itself slavishly copies Soviet styles, nor India, which has entrusted the direction of its national production to a Disney man, seems likely to overthrow the old regime.

Goodness knows how many naive little Indian or Ukrainian fables, how many frog-princesses, Soviet toy-towns, Danish lead soldiers, wicked foxes from Bulgaria, lazy bears from Rumania, disobedient ducks from Poland, still remain to be discovered and endured! And this state of affairs seems likely to continue while these film-makers fail to realise that the industry which has been their model—through so many intermediaries, and so often at third-hand—has itself been transformed since its distant beginnings, around 1914 . . .

In Hollywood, the opulent splendours of the Disney fairyland were superseded by the perpetual paroxysms of a kind of cartooning which, from Walter Lantz to Tex Avery, became steadily more aggressively explosive. Those particular qualities—caricature, humour, use of music—that first made us love the American cartoon largely vanished. Yet at the same time the animated film, and the whole art of single frame shooting, was experiencing a major evolution, a revolt against the conventions of a cartoon cinema which had become moribund.

Only with the Second World War did American cartoons begin to lose their world domination. Then, with much of Europe occupied and cut off from American films, other countries—Italy, Holland, France, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Canada—began to undertake production on their own account. It was the end of an empire and the beginning of new standards.

The giant Disney organisation, the heavy-weight representative of the old order, was quick to appraise and adjust

"Nowadays you can animate anything . . ."
A still from Henry Gruel's burlesque "*La Joconde*".

The way forward

by ANDRÉ MARTIN

to the new situation. Soon after the war it began making nature shorts, shot live; and in 1950 (the year of *Gerald McBoing Boing*) came its first live-action feature. Other companies were not so fortunate: the impact of television created its own problems and the cartoon studios could not escape the industry's economic crisis.

Meanwhile new studios, often one-man enterprises, were springing up all over the world. And this multiplication of animators inevitably brought with it a multiplication of styles and techniques, with far greater opportunities for the individual artist. Animated cinema is extending its range as a creative medium in its own right, one which disregards the merely reproductive aspects of film expression and which uses the single frame as its basic element.

New Styles

THE NEW CREATIVE ARTISTS have reacted less against classic production techniques than against the old "realistic" styles and conventional caricatures. Their purpose has not been to take up the cartoon where Tex Avery left off. The Czechs, for instance, have preferred their native traditions to the American comic caricature, and some of their best designers and illustrators have been associated with animation work. In the United States, Stephen Bosustow's UPA group drew from the first upon the latest trends in painting, illustration, cartoon, poster design. They moved from the old-style water colour still-life to the "eye appeal" of pure colour. Their backgrounds were influenced by Dufy, Braque and Klee and their characters by Steinberg. Most UPA designers are painters in their own right; and they have not been forced to subdue their personal preoccupations to the demands of a single uniform style.

Developments over the last ten years have confirmed this initial move towards individuality. "Nowadays you can animate anything," says Bosustow; and his artists have managed to give movement to Thurber's nervous sketches (*The Unicorn in the Garden*, '53) as well as to the rather over-free *gouaches* of Bemelmans (*Madeline*, '52). In Czechoslovakia one finds the same trend: Edouard Hoffman, one of the major artists in this field, has devoted a feature length film to the *Creation of the World* by the French humorous artist Jean Eiffel and has animated Capek's sketches for *The Little Dog and the Cat* ('50) and *Why Dogs Scratch the Earth* ('58). For *My Twelve Fathers* ('58), the story of a little girl neglected by her flighty mother, each of the twelve episodes was entrusted to one of the foremost artists of Czech animated cinema.

Recently, in another break with the old caricature formula, the Yugoslav cinema has shown that it has nothing to learn when it comes to modern styles. Design has been entrusted to high-calibre artists and painters. The effective restraint of Nikola Kostelac's work (*The Premiere, In a Meadow*, '56; *Nocturne*, '57), or the crackling pace and invention of the films made by Vatroslav Mimica (*The Lonesome One*, '57; *Happy End*, '58; *The Commissar Comes Home*, '59) show that this very young national school has already reached the front rank.

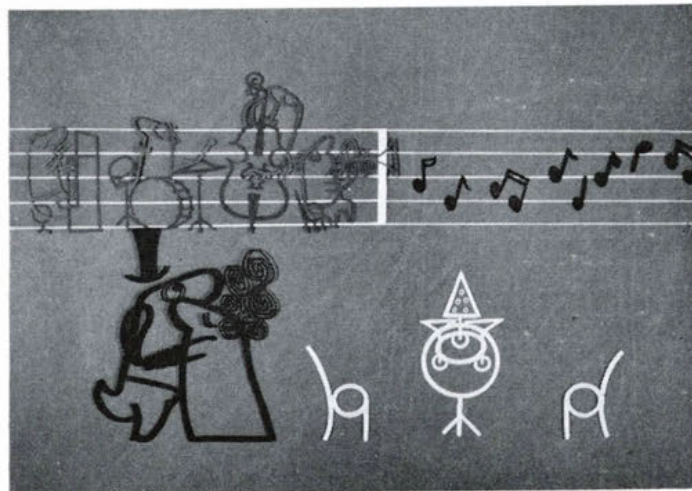
Nevertheless, this wholesale annexing of graphic styles can become damaging unless one has the sense of a single personality dominating the enterprise. So it is that at the



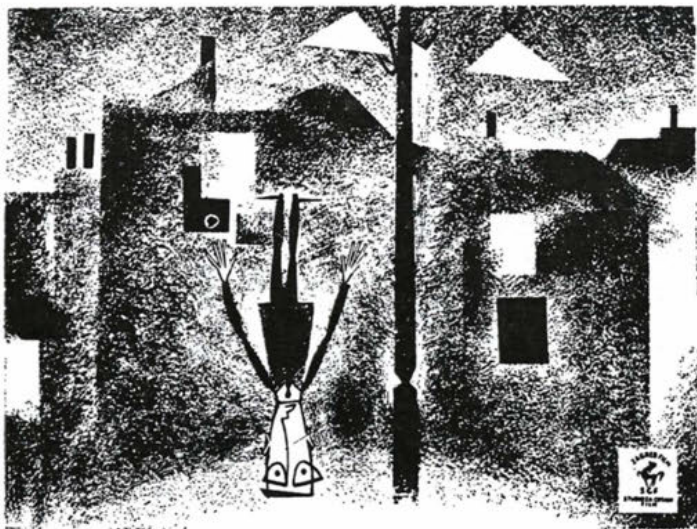
Traditional: "Why the Crow is Black," a Chinese cartoon in the style of the Soviet fables.

Canadian National Film Board all the creative artists of the animation department are capable of assuming responsibility for designing a film. With each new production they redistribute the various jobs—backgrounds, character, animation—reserving central responsibility to one of their number. So we find the names of almost all the team's artists on the credits of a film by Colin Low (*Romance of Transportation*, '52), Grant Munro (*Huff and Puff*, '56) or Wolf Koenig (*It's a Crime*, '57).

By contrast, a painter like Peter Foldes chooses a production method as solitary as that of an artist in his studio (*Animated Genesis*, '52; *A Short Vision*, '55). The great Czech painter and illustrator Jiri Trnka has preferred the more solid form of puppets, animated frame by frame, to the ceaseless movement of the cartoon. After the colourful world of *Bajaja* ('50) and the epic scenes of *Old Czech Legends* ('52), Trnka has now plunged into the nocturnal pageantry of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His treatment, on the evidence of the early stills, looks exceptionally sumptuous.



Invention: "Fudget's Budget," made by Robert Cannon for UPA.



Above: Vatroslav Mimica's "Un Solitaire," from the new Yugoslav animated cinema; and (below) John Hubley's "Adventures of *".

Reduction of Movement

THE REJECTION OF THE old caricature style required only a simple decision on the part of producers and designers. Abandonment of the rich and complex animation developed by Disney (admirably effective in shorts of the early days, such as *Alpine Climbers*, *Mouse Hunters*, *Lonesome Ghost*, *Clock Cleaners*) has been much less a question of deliberate choice. The qualities of this exuberant style of animation derived from long experience and massive production resources. Today's artists, having to make do with much less extensive means, must base their own technique on a minimum of movement, a somewhat parsimonious distribution of "fixed" elements and repeated motions, which fuses with their contemporary draughtsmanship to establish what has become a recognisable manner.

Movement now rarely involves the whole figure: either the head or the body remains stationary. In *Gerald McBoing Boing*, as in *Madeline*, the doctor enters the scene with body and head stiff, his bag held straight out in front of him, and only his little legs moving away like pedals. In *Fudget's*

Economy and scepticism: Ernst Pintoff's troubled "Flebus" (left); and the perplexed representative of Truth in "The Little Island".

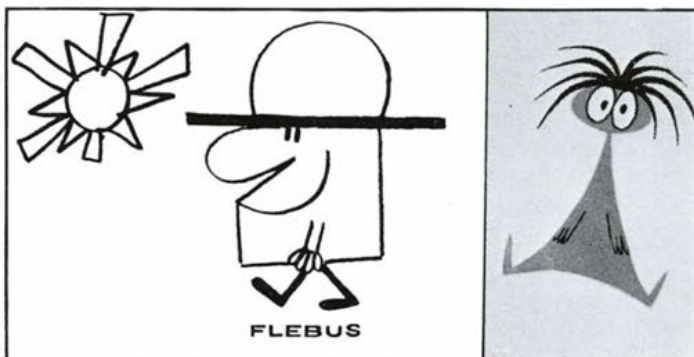
Budget ('55) a couple twice get up to dance, "because they enjoy it," then return to sit completely motionless at their nightclub table. This deliberate alternation of stylised movement and total immobility can be used to obvious satirical effect. Among the UPA team, Robert Cannon (*Gerald McBoing Boing*, *Christopher Crumpet*, *Fudget's Budget*) has made himself the special master of a style which might almost be called "drop by drop" animation. It has been successfully applied by Grant Munro in *Huff and Puff*, by John Halas, notably in *The History of the Cinema* ('56), and by the Poles Waclaw Waiser (*Yellow Beak*, '57) and Leszek Kaluza (*Heaven and Hell*, '57).

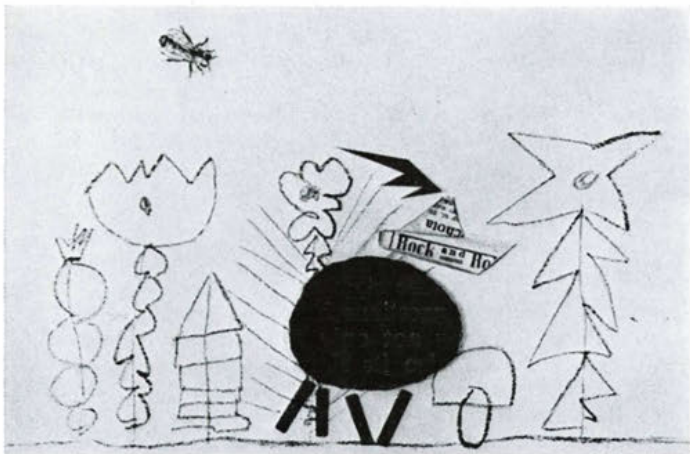
Yet conditions for animated cinema, in some countries at least, are likely to become still harder; and it may be that even this degree of economy will prove inadequate. With the rise of television, the old balance of the commercial cinema has been overthrown, and the fate of animated film-makers is no longer linked to that of the cinema as a whole. The big cartoon studios must close their doors or turn—at least in part—to production for television. And although television has from the outset been overwhelmed by inexhaustible stocks of old American-made cartoons, it still demands a great deal of new work. These films, mostly commercials, add up to an endless stream of ingenious, incisive, fast-moving little pictures. And this inevitably scrappy production itself means that units are repeatedly splitting up and re-forming around some new creative personality. Such production conditions scarcely encourage great art or highly polished film-making. Yet there is an advantage in the continual effort for new invention, new organisation, the sort of thing which is impossible within the more strictly controlled operations of the state-supported industries.

Moreover all the new production techniques—the use of electronics to control camera movement and even picture quality; new photographic techniques enabling the direct use of the coloured drawings produced by the animators, while eliminating the tedious chore of tracing and filling in which distorts the original design—are at present being used solely for speed and economy in production. In future, they might become liberating factors for the artist. And television itself must in the long run offer enviable creative conditions—if only to the privileged few.

A Cynical Economy

FOR THE TIME BEING, however, the American cartoon is still on the down-grade. The first ingenious (and rather expensive) UPA techniques have given way to the humourless stiffness of such recent Bosustow productions as the 1958 *Ham and Hattie* series. Two revolutionary productions from Terrytoons seemed momentarily to promise a new style, carrying asceticism in design to the point of cynicism. For his ironic psychoanalytical fable *Flebus* ('57), Ernst Pintoff threw his characters, themselves as lymphatic as sugar-lumps, into the wide spaces of a CinemaScope screen simply decorated with bands of pure colour. This came





"Once Upon a Time," made by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica.

dangerously close to breaking all records for economy of expression. Also for Terrytoons and in the same format. Al Kousel's *The Juggler of Our Lady* ('57) carried this dazzling impudence a stage further. Here, R. O. Blechman's minuscule scrawls were almost lost in the depths of the CinemaScope screen. But these delightful extravagances remain unique; and Terrytoons for the most part (the *Clint Cobber* series, for instance) are content with a sub-UPA "modernism".

In his allegory *The Little Island* ('58), the young Canadian artist Richard Williams uses the classic technique of cartoon design, partly in CinemaScope. Williams here remarkably illustrates human capacities for intolerance and murderous proselytising; and he even turns to advantage the economies imposed by his somewhat precarious conditions of production. The silence and stillness of the heroes of *The Little Island* are disturbed only by little hiccups, unexpected metamorphoses, abrupt little jumps which suddenly belie their high symbolic dignity and point up their true significance. This exceptionally original first film is a model alike of active scepticism and contemporary animated cinema—which is, after all, possibly the same thing. In the same laconic, edged manner, though with a somewhat artless style of drawing, Ion Popesco Gopo, founder of the Rumanian cartoon cinema, has made *A Short History* ('57) and *Seven Arts* ('58), both showing a very personal sense of cosmic comedy.

So, while some people are still trying to keep animated cinema in the nursery, the medium itself has moved a long way from the endless chases, slapstick routines and dancing toys of its beginnings. Now the cartoon tackles weightier subjects. UPA's productions steered a course towards a more adult humour, with their everyday comedies of the office and the family, and even touched tragedy with *The Tell-Tale Heart* ('53), adapted by Ted Parmelee from Edgar Allan Poe. Animated cinema is not afraid to express ideas and to take fairly complicated human relationships into account—the antipathies and sympathies of *Flebus*, for instance, or the suspect nature of pretty humanist ideas of the True, the Beautiful and the Good in *The Little Island*.

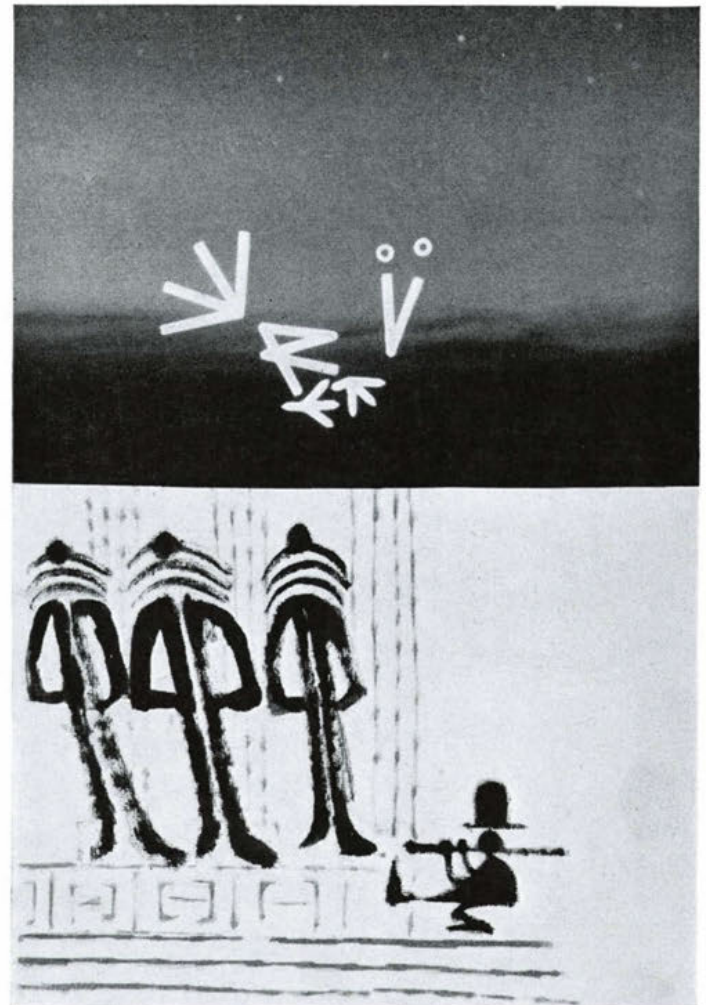
Hieroglyphs

GENERALLY SPEAKING, contemporary cartoonists are moving steadily further away from Disney's brand of fairy-tale realism, are trying to rediscover a sort of graphic sym-

Objects reduced to symbols: Above, Norman McLaren's "Le Merle". Below, John Hubley's design for the credit titles of the CBS Television show "Seven Lively Arts".

bolism which had seemed lost since the early days of Emile Cohl and Felix the Cat. In America especially the *avant-garde* film-makers, working outside the commercial system and untroubled by the need to establish a relation with their public, produce agreeable abstractions in design and movement. These are descendants of the German-made musical geometrics of Eggelink, Fishinger and Richter. But the more interesting ventures are not concerned with this sort of abstraction but rather with abstraction philosophically conceived, where cartoon images are used to express ideas, to convey symbol or allegory. Jacques Feyder proclaimed that the cinema would one day be able to put the *Discours de la Méthode* on the screen. If he was right, it will be because of the work of animated rather than live-action film-makers, because of Norman McLaren and Richard Williams rather than Renoir or Rossellini.

It is more than ten years since Philip Stapp persuaded us, in *Boundary Lines* and *Picture in Your Minds*, to follow imaginary lines on the screen. John Hubley, one of the most important of UPA's innovators (*Flat Hatting*, '46; *Rooty Toot Toot*, '52) has a very personal graphic style. But the expressive quality of his films derives from the way he manages to give objects and people an almost symbolic quality, to strip them down, as it were, to their essential elements, and so to let them carry his comment on emotions or events. So, in *The Adventures of ** ('57) he contrasts a child's wonder-struck vision with an adult's disillusioned view of reality. In *The Tender Game* ('58) his setting is a park, and his boating party, his little flower kiosk, his study of the artificial gaiety and thinly disguised emotion of a pair of young lovers sitting on a park bench, are realised



with the subtlety of Chinese calligraphy. In a similar style are his credit title designs for the CBS television shows *The Seven Lively Arts* and *The Twentieth Century*.

Increasingly, and from a variety of sources, one encounters this tendency towards greatly simplified ideographic patterns. It is present in *Blue Pattern* and *Performing Painter* (both 1956; Ernst Pintoff and John Whitney for UPA), in *Once Upon a Time* (1957, the first film by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica), which uses cut outs, scraps of photographs and coloured paper, in continually shifting patterns, and in *Chansons sans Paroles* ('58), the first film by the Israeli director Yorma Gross, in which cigarettes, matches, scraps of paper are manipulated and their manoeuvres given a kind of emotional meaning.

The creative techniques employed by Norman McLaren often enforce the same rigid stylisation of design. When he draws direct on to film, sketching the chickens of *Hen Hop* or scratching the Chinese monsters of *Blinkity Blank* on the tiny area of a frame of film, he has to reduce them to the simplest possible form. But he imposes the same deliberate restrictions in *Le Merle* ('58); though here his method, the animation of paper cut outs, does not compel him to reduce his hero to a few stripes and a couple of lines.

There is an element of semantic fantasy about this approach; and McLaren applies it equally to conventional symbols already simplified by centuries of usage. An inventor of new systems of writing, McLaren will juggle with letters (*Two Bagatelles*), symbols (*Dollar Dance*), numerals (*Five for Four, Rhythmic*). Always excited by the mechanics of symbol meaning, he may one day make the film he dreams about, which would be devoted to the links between seeing and understanding, to classifying the methods by which the mind groups, selects and interprets visual information ranging from the simplest image to symbol and allegory. McLaren's film techniques have proved extraordinarily effective when applied in elementary education in China and India. Here perhaps is the foundation for an international visual "language".

Strongly influenced by posters, exhibitions, the styling of

commercial products, Saul Bass's credit titles for feature films show the same appreciation of the needs of communication. His method is to extract the graphic root of the theme of the film for visual exploitation: the tears, for instance, which prefaced *Bonjour Tristesse*, the bullet-holes in the Goya engravings for *The Pride and the Passion*, the old press cuttings for *Cowboy*. Always the emphasis is on legibility, and the direct impact.

Art in Its Own Right

NO LONGER TIED TO the style of the "comics", animated cinema can receive suggestions from any branch of modern pictorial art, adapting not only its draughtsmanship and plastic qualities but also its simplified shapes, distortions of perspective and balance, use of pure or clotted visual tones. Beneath Richard Williams's intellectual irony in dealing with eternal symbols, beneath the purposeful magic of McLaren's *Blinkity Blank* or the dazzling individuality of Trnka's puppets, lies a cinema which is not merely an extension of the graphic arts, but an art form in its own right.

The early pioneers of animation, men such as Stuart Blackton and Emile Cohl, extracted, however artlessly, all the consequences that followed the principles of single frame shooting, giving movement alike to drawings, paper cut outs or puppets as much as to objects or live characters.

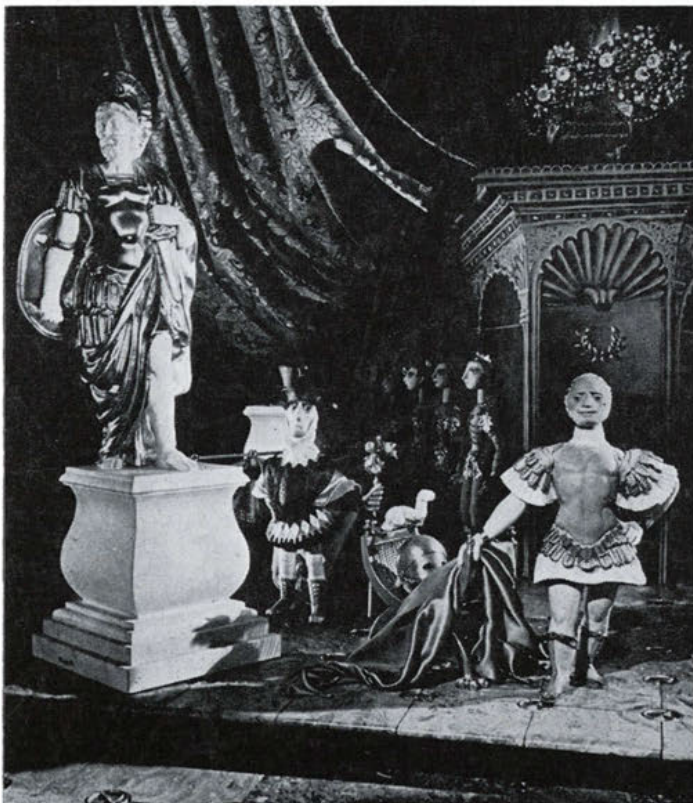
The development of the Disney-style cartoon, however, was based on the characteristics and advantages of an animation technique of successive drawings on celluloid. It allowed for great precision in animation and encouraged a division of labour which made mass production practicable. But this technique, used to the exclusion of any other, made it easy to forget the enormous range of frame-by-frame cinema.

Not until Trnka abandoned cartoon filming for puppets, for instance, could this other major technique (already demonstrated by Ptuschnko, Starevitch and George Pal) leave the realm of the trick toy and achieve its own standing as an art. The Czech puppet film school still has few rivals. One can, however, cite several names from Poland (Wlodzimierz Haupe, Jerzy Kotowski and Edward Sturlis, with *The Boastful Knight*, '56, and *Sinbad the Sailor*, '57); and in France the Bettiol-Lonati-Bettiol group has made some remarkably original publicity films using puppets.

But three-dimensional animation cannot always be applied to articulated puppets. Etienne Raik, who also makes publicity films in France, shows fantastic cunning in moving objects about magically or balletically (*Elle Court*, or the dance of plastic products in *Alcathene Circus*). In Czechoslovakia, Bratislav Pojar is another master of animation technique, hurling highly realistic figures and objects into dazzling arabesques of movement (*A Drop too Much*, '53; *The Little Umbrella*, '57; *The Lion and the Song*, '59).

This new era now opening up for animated cinema is going to be marked by the widest possible range of techniques and processes. For over twenty years, Norman McLaren has been demonstrating the immense technical possibilities that exist—making films with or without a camera, handling printing and colour separation in the optical printer, using paper cut outs, animating live characters through his "pixilated" technique, etc. McLaren, in fact, invents a new kind of cinema for almost every film he makes. And in this light animation begins to seem a sort of watchmaker's job, a kind of cinema in which technical difficulties and opportunities assume a special importance. This is film-making for the pleasure of creation itself. And it is the artist's control over all the creative elements which gives animated cinema its unique value.

Opulent design in a scene from Jiri Trnka's puppet version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream".





"An Invention of Destruction": the effect of a steel engraving in Karel Zeman's film of the Jules Verne fantasy.

With technical advances, the old "black magic" of Méliès has rediscovered a new evocative power. The Czech director Karel Zeman, for instance, adapting a Jules Verne novel for *An Invention of Destruction* ('58), combined by successive exposures actual sets, mock-ups, period documents, puppets and live actors. The effect he achieved was that of an old steel engraving—a style ideally suited to the futuristic charm of Jules Verne's Victorian fantasy. Zeman is now preparing, in the same style, a *Baron Munchausen* based on Gustave Doré's illustrations.

Artists in this field are certainly not afraid of new techniques; and they do not hesitate to combine several in a single film, to blend animated drawings and objects with live action filming. Henry Gruel's *La Joconde* ('58) does this with a wonderful sense of organised chaos, burlesquing Da Vinci's famous portrait. Some prefer to create at the printing stage by making multiple exposures, forwards or backwards, by staggering the original from one exposure to another, by making fades or mixes, by adding colour or modifying it through the use of filters, all this disregarding the conventional method of editing (i.e., the splice). Len Lye's super-montage for *Rhythm* ('56), Robert Breer's shooting of a series of static photographic images in *James-ton Baloos* ('57), Hy Hirsch's *Divertissement Rococo* and *Enri*, John Whitney's *Celery Stalks at Midnight* ('58), McLaren's *Short and Sweet* ('59) could not exist without a creative technique precise down to the single image. And the technical problems generated would send anyone mad who had not got his training in the hard and exact school of animation.

This present emphasis on technical variety, the temptation to play every possible game with colour, light, the interplay of images, is bound to mean that some film-makers will try to outbid each other in ingenuity and that there will be more trickery than poetic reflection. But this range of techniques is still full of opportunities for the genuine artist: it need not inhibit the personal, thought-out expression of ideas.

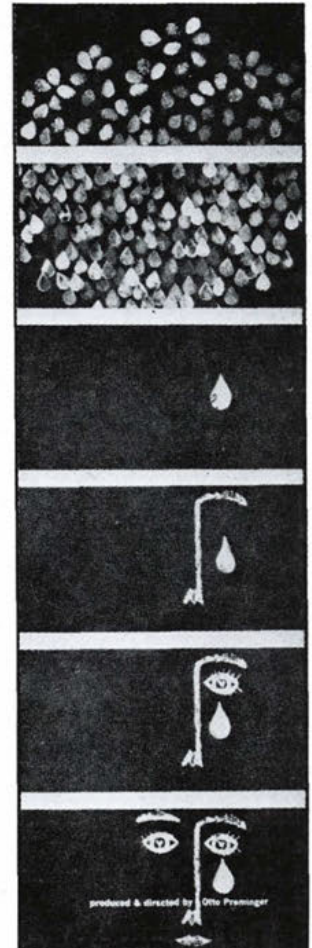
An economical technique such as the animation of cut outs, for instance, made it possible for the founders of the Canadian Film Board's animation department to produce original work while their production organisation was still precarious. It enabled Henry Gruel to animate children's drawings in 1953, at a time when France had virtually no animated cinema. In Britain, it allowed Bob Godfrey and

Vera Linnecar to make for the Grasshopper Group their brilliant *Watch the Birdie* ('54); in Poland, Borowczyk and Lenica used it for their first film, *Once Upon a Time*.

For his *Metropolitan* ('59), Henry Gruel has built an ingenious apparatus which allows him frame-by-frame control of shadows and colour reflections on a screen, so that he can obtain pictures which unite the Chinese shadow-play of Lotte Reiniger and the animated transparencies of the Japanese Noburo Ofuji or of Berthold Bartosch. Animation by direct drawing, or even engraving on the film itself, also maintains the intimacy which some artists need to share with their creation. Harry Smith in the United States, Catone Camello in Italy, Albert Pierru in France, and recently Len Lye—who invented this kind of cinema and whose *Free Radicals* ('57) proves him still one of its masters—all devote themselves to this kind of animation without intervention by the camera.

Another variation is the "pin screen" invented by Alexandre Alexeieff for his *Night on the Bare Mountain* ('34) and *En Passant* ('43). In his most daring publicity shorts (*Fumées*, '51; *Sève de la Terre*, '55) Alexeieff developed a brand new system for animated film, pushing further back the frontiers of single frame shooting. By exposing each frame for as long as thirty seconds, using the intricate oscillations of a compound pendulum (i.e., with two separate bodies hanging from a single axis), he was able to create fleeting linear structures adding up to an illusion of volume. A slight alteration in the oscillating system helped him to produce a different form with each new frame exposed. If these successive imaginary forms are put together in a filmic continuity, movement yet unknown to the human mind can be brought to life. Alexeieff so invents a kind of third-grade cinema, puts in question the range of our perceptions and gives us, no longer the traditional interplay of forms in motion, but the forms themselves in their process of evolution.

No one can finally doubt the inevitable expansion of animated cinema. With the rapidly extending range of production, there are bound to be even more mediocre or naively experimental productions. We can expect a rapid increase in the number of films made for information, publicity, education or prestige—work which may lack something in inspiration but which can be dazzling in appearance. And from all this there will emerge the ten or twelve front-rank directors whose work will give animated cinema its clear status, appreciable by all film-lovers. Fortunately, the adventure is only just beginning . . .

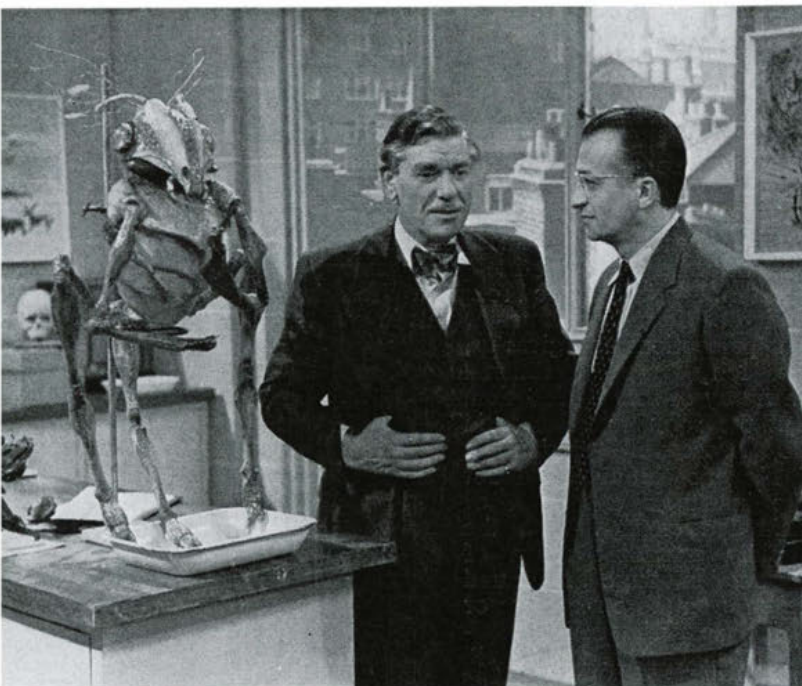


Part of Saul Bass's design for the credit titles of "Bonjour Tristesse".



NIGEL
KNEALE

NOT QUITE SO INTIMATE



Two scenes from "Quatermass and the Pit". Above: the space ship; below: Andre Morell (Quatermass) and Cec Linder.

I HAVE BEEN WRITING television plays for about seven years. An interesting time to be close to the thing, as it included the phase of its most rapid growth in this country, from a social joke to a social problem. The 9-inch "goggle box" has expanded to the 21-inch Home Screen.

I have no claim to be a pioneer, of course. The covered wagon days of TV were long ago, before the war. But when I came to it I found people were still baffled. Plays in particular—what should they be?

I watched sad radio men trying to turn it into illustrated radio, using still photographs to keep that infernal screen occupied. And disappointed men from films despairing at limitations of time and space that confounded their too-loose scripts. In canteens and conferences I have heard arguments about the missing mystique, the TV Philosopher's Stone that would confer legitimacy on a bastard medium, and make it an art-form overnight.

The favourite bet was on Intimacy. "It's a small screen, so

it stands to reason you have to get in close." This appealed strongly. One enthusiastic producer made a cult of it, and shot play after play entirely in close-up, regardless of the monotony of a series of almost identical compositions. We heard reports of an American school of intimate TV writing. But apart from one or two like Chayevsky, their scripts turned out disappointing, their gimmick a weird, tiny rhetoric. Self-important and repetitious. Dead end. The probing for the heart of television's mystery went vaguely on.

It was confusion of thought, of course, that afflicted us. Like expecting a mid-adolescent to have a formed identity.

To get the ultimate out of any medium, it must be possible to define its limitations. And the limitations were indefinable. They changed almost week by week, both at the transmission and reception ends. I have written among other things three *Quatermass* serials, all produced by Rudolph Cartier. The first, in 1953, was shot on what were literally the oldest operational cameras in the world, with fixed lenses and "watch-the-birdie" viewfinders, tracking on bicycle wheels. The second, in 1955, came from a well-equipped studio and was telerecorded on film. When the third came up for production a few months ago, there were such enormous technical aids as console lighting and video tape. But more important is the development of the audience's sets. In a few years screens will probably measure about five feet by three, and have far higher definition than today. Relatively, they will be as large as those in cinemas. The smallness will have gone for good, and anybody still battling out special techniques for it will be left with them on his hands. The "intimacy" idea will only be of antiquarian interest, like the tiny screens that produced it.

Already it is becoming clear that there is *no* technique, but a thousand. Increasing mechanical resources should make style as individual to the story and the teller of it as in any other medium—a book, for example, or a well-made film. Television drama at its best will be almost identical with film at its best. Both, I suppose, are essentially literary forms

with the surface appearance of being dramatic forms. Like books, their shape is fixed, unaffected by audience or reader. You sometimes hear sighs about "young writers being forced to turn to television." Forced? To move from, say, short story writing to real TV writing seems as natural as switching from stories to novels.

2

It is easy enough to get familiar with the grammar. Studio resources, movement of actors from set to set, and so on. More valuable is to know something about camerawork, about the scope of set design and special effects. Most valuable of all is close co-operation with the producer, who in most cases is the director too.

Pressure of programming and budget make every TV production a fast-moving business. Responsibility for casting, pre-filming, rehearsal, camerawork and transmission all land on the producer's shoulders. The writer can help a great deal by providing a fully workable script, both dialogue and visual, with film sequences broken down into detailed shooting-script form since they will be dealt with first. Then the producer can add his own ideas effectively, instead of wasting valuable time on problems.

The writer should make himself available throughout this highly complicated rush operation, to act as the central point of reference. After all, he knows more about the characters and purposes of his story than anyone.

This close involvement is worth the time it takes up. Ideally, he becomes half of a two-man team, and the final shape of the story on the screen can reflect the original conception with a clarity that is easily lost when too many hands get to work.

The best TV producers welcome the writer's full collaboration right through to the transmission date—assuming he knows his business.

Shooting film inserts is the first active part of the production. These can be substantial, and provide a most useful extension of the story beyond the cramped studio sets where three or four constantly moving TV cameras will take up much of the available space on transmission day. Film adds both physical freedom and atmosphere. The impact of the TV version of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, which Rudolph Cartier and I did together, was increased a lot by exterior sequences in an apparently half-ruined London. In *Quatermass and the Pit*, the uncovering of a space-ship from deep, real mud was shot from the full height of a Transatlantic crane—a session in a film studio that later added valuable realism to scenes in the electronic studio, where "mud" means a sprinkling of peat over canvas and the small Mole-Richardson is the biggest crane there's normally room for.

There are TV producers who fight shy of film inserts. Some are purists who argue that the entirely live show has a flow and a homogeneity which are spoiled by them. More often it has been due to unhappy experiences with badly scripted—or even totally unscripted—snippets of film, shot at the wrong tempo and uncuttable. "Film of Fred going to work. On the way he meets Valerie and presently they enter the factory together. Cut to studio." Anybody who watches television will have seen the results of that sort of thing. You still see them occasionally—exterior sequences of half-identifiable characters, wandering in long, panning shots taken silent, to be covered by recorded music in the studio. They were generally rationalised as: "Well, film inserts are a mistake, anyway." On an even lower level, film

has functioned as a mere linking device. Meaningless scraps of stock would occupy the screen while an actress changed a wig or furniture was reset on the studio floor: they seemed to be the alternative to stage captions reading "The same, two days later" and showed an equally dim grasp of elementary presentation. (I'm not anti-producer, just anti-bad producer. Like any other business, television has its quota of clowns.)

But whenever filmed sequences are properly made—meaningful scenes with natural sound, with overlaps for grafting—they blend into the live production so that the audience is unaware of them. In the last *Quatermass* serial, for instance, some 45 minutes were on film out of a total screen time of 3½ hours—and a surprisingly satisfactory number of expert colleagues failed to spot exactly which 45 minutes. All the technically difficult scenes, involving special effects which it would have been risky to tackle live, were filmed, giving the producer much greater control.

Control . . . precision. These are the elements that until recently were always unpleasantly lacking in live television.

Weeks of rehearsal would culminate in the studio on transmission day. Now the filmed and live scenes would join for the first time. All the actual sets, props, effects were there at last. Now and only now could the actual effect of the play be assessed—when it was too late to alter anything. Not only that, but disaster could strike in many forms. Your leading man could fall sick or drop dead. It's only remarkable that more haven't done so. I have watched actors clad for midwinter struggling through a transmission when studio lamps plus a heatwave had raised the temperature to 115 degrees, and property candles melted in their sticks. Or the side of a camera might fall off and hit the floor with a clang during a whispered love scene. (One type of camera was notorious for this.)

Most destructive of all, to the production and the author's intentions, was the wandering booby. Appearing in his dust-coat at the court of Henry VIII, or outside a 40th-floor window of a skyscraper. One play of mine had what was intended as a tense, penultimate scene in a Himalayan ice-cave at 22,000 feet. Two heavily clad characters were acting hard on transmission when a figure appeared outside the cave. It wore a dust-coat and was busily sweeping up the eternal snows. A booby, it turned out, who was in a hurry to get home and thought he would clear up early. In those days plays were repeated live a few days later, so at the second transmission he was firmly warned. To make sure, the cave was rendered booby-proof with a black sky-cloth and a large stack of boxes. But, with a waywardness that had something wonderful in it, he managed to appear again. They should put up a statue to him at the Television Centre, a monument to the old days.

Now video tape enables the whole production to be pre-recorded. Actors have had some of the burden lifted from them, of being judged on a first-night performance without benefit of retakes. Technical mishaps will soon be obliterated. The day of the booby is almost done.

There will be a few who regret it. The canteen mystics who insisted that an actual live performance held some extra telepathic force. And saner ones who feel that those first-night nerves can on certain occasions bring out acting of such quality that the audience would no more notice the side of a camera falling, than a pin. I think that's true. I saw it happen in our *Nineteen Eighty-four*, for instance.

Of course, complete technical control is essential. Without

it, no hope could exist of television ever becoming an art-form. (What would have happened to literature if words changed their meaning under the pen, or to painting if colours kept altering and running off the canvas?) But even with that, has it any chance? Does its future hold an all-electronic *Citizen Kane* or *Bicycle Thieves*? Or is it doomed to become a mere home-projection system endlessly blaring out commercials, rigged panel games, endless streams of vile little quickies? A sort of juke-box with vision.

3

It depends on the audience, and I suppose on their elected representatives in whose hands is the fate of the rival networks. Viewers are already separating into clear groups. The larger one is the happily habit-formed; demanding the *Mixture as Before*, the next series of quickies exactly like the last one. Then there are the others, the enquiring ones whose interests have actually been extended. The first group are the fodder, the second the only possible justification, of TV.

It is with the second group, the minority as usual, that the writer must be concerned. He can put real characters and ideas before them, parts in which actors can extend themselves. He must have the awakening and continuing interest of that audience. In the long run his freedom depends on them—his freedom, that is, of the networks.

For that is the attraction of television at the present time—its readiness to tackle subjects that the film industry might balk at. Minority-appeal pieces, or what later turn out to be majority-appeal pieces but which at first are new and frightening to the delicate senses of impresarios. TV is more receptive simply because its programme space has to be filled somehow, and costs are relatively low. But this can sinisterly change. The habit-formed may demand their *Mixture* in larger and larger quantities as an inalienable right. And the quickie-makers will find ways to meet that demand.



(Talent? Watch out for script-computers.)

At this point somebody says: "What's Kneale talking about? He himself writes science-fiction serials, those Quatermass things."

Well, I don't like the term "science-fiction", but if we're going to bandy it about, it could be applied just as well to the world we live in. The form is appropriate, if taken seriously. And that is the way I do take it. I try to give those stories some relevance to what is round about us today. The last one, for instance, was a race-hatred fable that broke through to an encouragingly large and intelligent audience. On the technical side, it went about as far as possible towards exploding the "intimacy" fallacy. Huge sets, long shots, crowd scenes were the order of the day. One critic remarked: "Not only does it sweep away detachment, but it obliterates also the feeling of being a solitary spectator; one reacts to it with enlarged response as a member of a communal audience."

The serial, I should point out, is a different animal from the quickie *series* to which I have just been taking objection—those are unconnected little anecdotes from many, often hasty hands, bundled together under a generic title. The serial, in contrast, is a complete play. A six-part one, for instance, has a total running time of 3 hours. (A recording of my last serial is being experimentally re-shown in two 90-minute halves.) Within that framework it is possible to tackle a fairly complex idea in detail, using a full range of characters. It gives you time to shape a whole background. More important, there is time to build up gradual suggestions into springboards for the audience's own imagination. Unless this can be set off, after all, television is what its critics accuse it of being—a soporific.

I have written other types of TV play, am planning more. Meanwhile I have been involved with films—writing screen-plays of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (an intimate subject presented in widescreen, just for a change) and *The Entertainer*. My short experience here seems to confirm that the demands of the, so far, larger screen are not very different from television's. Less load for the dialogue to carry, greater freedom of physical action—on the other hand, there are pressures. Economic, since the costs involved are so much greater. Distributors' pressures, censorship pressures . . .

In any case, it looks as if most of those who work for either will soon enough be working for both—a combined film-and-television industry.

Films have already had a lot of their surplus fat sweated away, and seem the better for it. Television is still putting it on—puppy fat, perhaps, but most of it unhealthy. What both need is more muscle.

Will their descendant be stronger and more adventurous than either of its forbears?

Or, gloomy thought, flabbier than both?

Nigel Kneale and Tony Richardson on location for "Look Back in Anger".

Film Reviews

MARCH TO ALDERMASTON

THE MOOD OF ALDERMASTON was not unique in this country. Eighteen months earlier, it had been foreshadowed in the more directly political upsurge of feeling at the time of Suez. One could go further back to the hunger marchers, the suffragettes, to a dozen instances of "direct action" arising out of the more violent political climate of the 19th century. Aldermaston, though, may have meant something new in the mistrust of politicians that was part of the atmosphere of the march—as it is part of the atmosphere of the times. *March to Aldermaston* (Contemporary) makes this quite explicit in its commentary. "Being ordinary people, we are not supposed to know about politics," it claims. The marchers, it states elsewhere, have been called irresponsible, "but it is not irresponsible to have convictions, and to act on them."

The Aldermaston marchers, the campaigners for Nuclear Disarmament, hold two main convictions: a determination to see nuclear warfare outlawed, which anyone in his senses must share; and, much more arguable, a belief that this country has a duty to lead the way by unilateral disarmament. The second conviction leads inevitably into the field of political ways and means; and it is when one reaches this point that the film's division into "them" (the politicians) and "us" (ordinary people) begins to be edged with its own irresponsibility. Aldermaston was a pilgrimage, an act of faith, perhaps. It was also, inescapably, a political gesture. Yet it is here that the film ducks out: it is only the first conviction, not the far more difficult problems involved in the second, that it confronts. It implies that "they" must be castigated for failure, while "we" can take political action and keep our hands clean.

In fact, the film has less to say directly about conviction than about people. Its concern is with the marchers, with showing—in close observation, in interviews filmed straight into camera, television style—the puzzled, honest, purposeful mood of the people who went to Aldermaston. Many of its images are memorable: the women at their gateway, giving cheerful if slightly derisive encouragement; the closed, defensive faces of a group of onlookers by the gate of London Airport; the girl who breaks the line of the march to jig along beside the column; the piano playing at a night stop and the shots of people settling down for the night under a single bare lamp. A skilfully constructed sound and music track makes the most of all this, as well as of



"March to Aldermaston": onlookers and (below) marchers.

the beautiful (in this context, almost too beautiful) shots of the column marching at night under the streetlamps of a town.

March to Aldermaston is humane, journalism given a charge of poetry: in its emphasis on the need for gaiety as well as protest, it is strongly affirmative. Rather surprisingly, it carries gentleness almost to the point of softness. We are shown enthusiasm, in the dancing groups and banner-wreathed faces, but little passion. When the film sets out to underline its message, by intercutting still photographs of Hiroshima victims with shots of the marchers, it generates pity but not horror. Here it avoids the flashier techniques of propaganda, but somehow its method of quiet statement is less telling and powerful than it should be.

The film was made by a team of anonymous technicians, though the publicity sheet lists a committee of eleven. Among them are documentarists, including several associated with Free Cinema, and some from television; and the style of the film reflects something of a split between the two. Television, one guesses, has contributed the interviews, the direct statement. Free Cinema's method appears in the affectionate observation of groups and individuals, the implied comment. The balance between the two methods is not perfect. The commentary, firmly spoken by an anonymous voice instantly identifiable as Richard Burton's, is overloaded with statement, with a kind of didacticism. "Living is a big word but it means a million little things," is an example of a deliberately simple style that often seems to say rather more than it need.

March to Aldermaston demands respect. It is exciting that such a film should be made, and that the Academy Cinema, in a brave piece of programme building, is showing it along with the revival of Renoir's pacifist statement, *La Grande Illusion*. But the reservations remain. Any film of this kind is bound to be propaganda as well as record; and here is propaganda which sets out to convey the conviction, the decency, the "ordinariness" of the Aldermaston marchers, to suggest that a cause which has such supporters demands the support of all of us. The Aldermaston marchers do us all a service by raising political issues in moral terms. But a film like this, with the mistrust and resentment of politicians that it makes so explicit, must still ultimately throw the responsibility back to them. One would have welcomed a little more straight political thinking along with the humanitarianism. It seems almost significant that in none of the interviews are we confronted with any of those politicians who also made the march to Aldermaston.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

JOYCE CARY'S portrait of an artist as a down-and-out buffoon with criminal tendencies, honest in nothing but his art and doomed to destruction, skates round the edges of caricature with a virtuosity of language and vitality of imagination that makes it an undeniable literary *tour de force*.

In a film which is as much Alec Guinness's personal creation

as anything he has so far made (Guinness conceived the idea, persuaded a producer it was possible, wrote the script, and plays the chief part), the main incidents of the novel have been strung together to form a story; and the director, Ronald Neame, has been at great pains to find a reality into which Cary's creation could most plausibly be fitted. Sometimes his success is remarkable. Guinness's physical appearance, for example, is totally persuasive. The week's growth of stubble, the shambling gait, the spirit-sodden growl of a voice, the shifty red-rimmed eyes, the hunched, belligerent shoulders, are all, in their own way, as much a *tour de force* as the style of Cary's novel. It is when Gulley Jimson begins to be involved in a story that our faith in his reality dwindles. His love-hate relationship with his patron, Hickson, is sketched in brilliantly, but never explored; his entanglement with Sarah, his ex-model, who slyly diddles him out of a valuable canvas, is a fragment of the past which sticks up uneasily through the fabric of the story. When he is baulked by Sarah, Gulley's farcical adventures in the flat of a prospective client, and his final attempt to express himself on the wall of a church doomed to demolition, never finally take the plunge; the film skirts gingerly round a complex and fascinating theme, but never becomes deeply involved with it.

This theme is implicit both in the script and the acting, and there are constant intimations of something much grander than a series of excuses for farcical comedy. The action is broken for minutes on end by self-exploratory speeches about the creative impulse of an artist, the terrible suffering it entails—and the film leans all the time towards an examination of a painter tormented by enormous and urgent visions, who cannot express them because no frame, no canvas, no wall, however great, can contain them. So, in the final moments of the picture, we see Gulley drifting down the Thames on his barge, measuring his thumb against the vast side of an ocean-going ship, sailing past into the open horizon, to look for a backcloth large enough to encompass what he has to say.

This self-destructive streak in the artist is hinted at all through the film: the flat where Gulley works for a few weeks is reduced to a pile of wreckage, the church wall he uses for a fresco is swiftly demolished, and he himself reflects that he has only to paint something for it to be singled out for destruction by some malignant force. Yet it is just this side of the film which satisfies least. It is not related to sufficiently stirring images in the story, and it is distracted by the comedy. It is not that the picture falls between two stools—it would not be a completely serious film if it did not try to stand on both stools at once—but that some failure to grasp the essence of the serious theme has taken the spontaneity out of the laughter. Some echo of what might have been can be heard in the episodes which create the combination of naïveté and single-minded brutality in Gulley's character, the frankly ruthless self-interest of the inspired artist, choked by

convention and driven to devious and maniacal contrivances in order to exist and express himself. Then, and only then, the picture becomes ironic, pungent and truly comic—if a little condescendingly farcical.

Perhaps the result would almost have been happier with less worthy intentions. The acting is sincere; Kay Walsh, as Gulley's barmaid conscience, and Renee Houston, as Sarah, give well thought-out performances of a richness we do not often see; and Mike Morgan could not be more pathetically earnest as Gulley's 'other self', his disciple and whipping post. The paintings, by John Bratby, are as faithful to the spirit of Cary's novel as any could be. But too much of the seriousness remains incidental rather than essential: the irrelevant cough that Guinness adopts is a good representative of the picture's failings—thin, a little dry, occasionally funny, but not serious to the point of death.

KENNETH CAVANDER

GIGI

VINCENTE MINNELLI'S WORK since *The Band Wagon* has been largely a disappointment: CinemaScope musicals of the order of *Brigadoon* and *Kismet* could only be considered hack-work, while "serious" films like *The Cobweb* and *Lust for Life* have confirmed a suspicion that he is really incapable of anything more than a superficial and decorative treatment of non-musical subjects. Of course, there is no reason to belittle the talent of the director of *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *The Pirate*; and in *Gigi* (MGM) he has found another subject that gives scope for his qualities of taste, delicacy, and feeling for period and place. Colette's tale of a young girl being trained by her grandmother and aunt to take her place in a distinguished line of *demi-mondaines*, who defeats their plans by refusing to become the mistress of a young millionaire and at last so far betrays family tradition as to become his wife, is not, on the face of it, a likely subject for Hollywood. Not only the delicious amorality of the anecdote, but also the honesty and irony of its telling, have become foreign to the American cinema. Moreover, the unwieldy proportions of present-day screens are not conducive to subtlety or intimacy.

One is first of all astonished, therefore, to find that the outline of Colette's story and much of her dialogue are preserved unchanged; even more surprising, the film manages to convey something of her wit and tolerance in its very style—the extensions of incident and character are made with tact and ingenuity, following hints in her narrative and remaining faithful to its spirit.

Gigi has been written for the screen by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, the lyricist and composer respectively of *My Fair Lady*. Like *Pygmalion*, *Gigi* is basically a variation on the theme of Ugly-Duckling-into-Swan: this slight similarity of theme may be a coincidence, but in other ways the authors have more deliberately made *Gigi* resemble its predecessor. The musical devices that are so fresh in *My Fair Lady* are in fact a very clever adaptation of the forms of operetta, which had fallen into disuse with the arrival of a slicker style of musical writing. They are effective devices and one can hardly blame Lerner and Loewe for wishing to capitalise on the success of the formula they discovered: one's only criticism is that it has now become something of a formula. Also they have not always resisted a tendency to overwrite, especially in the long numbers that Louis Jourdan delivers in Rex Harrison style. Up to a point these numbers, in which dialogue cunningly dovetails into song, succeed in their purpose of projecting character and situation by lyrical means. But beyond that point the sentiment of the first of these songs—"It's a Bore"—is apt to be echoed by the audience.

The happiest inspiration is undoubtedly the addition to the cast of that "elder Lachaille" mentioned in passing by Colette as a former friend of *Gigi*'s grandmother, in the person of Maurice Chevalier. As an elderly *boulevardier* uncle of Gaston's, he not only presents a contrast to that young man's jaded view of the world, but serves also as a kind of chorus, commenting on the action and embodying the essential hedonism that under-



"The Horse's Mouth": Ernest Thesiger, Kay Walsh and Alec Guinness.

lies it. Chevalier's practised but irresistible charm is one of the film's great assets; another is the brilliant high-comedy playing of Isabel Jeans, who as Aunt Alicia consummately portrays the distinction and beauty of a retired aristocrat of the *demi-monde*. Gigi's grandmother, Mme. Alvarez, is altogether more easily complaisant, almost common, and Hermione Gingold is well able to convey the earthiness of this character. When she has to engage our sympathies, it is perhaps a little more difficult to forget the *persona* that she has manufactured for herself and, especially in America, so assiduously promoted—except in her nostalgic duet with Chevalier, performed by both with real sweetness and warmth.

As Gigi, Leslie Caron manages convincingly the transition from gawky adolescent innocence to poised elegance. She is able to achieve this largely by kinetic means—although there is no dancing to speak of, her performance is essentially that of a dancer. (It is worth mentioning in passing one's gratitude that no attempt was made to insert dance numbers more or less by force into a story that does not call for them.) As Gaston, Louis Jourdan is sympathetic and reveals some expertise both in comedy and in his songs.

Visually, *Gigi* is an elegant film. Joseph Ruttenberg's CinemaScope photography overcomes the awkwardness of the screen's proportions with some fluency and an ingenuity that is only occasionally obtrusive. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of Cecil Beaton's contribution. There has been a spate of musicals set in Paris, ever since Minnelli's own *An American in Paris*, with its too self-conscious *tableaux vivants* from familiar Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings. A cultivated visual taste is everywhere apparent in *Gigi*. If reference is made to the style of a French painter, it is without ostentation, as in the Trouville beach scene reminiscent of Boudin; the costume design is exquisite, and the interiors—the cosy crimson plush of Mme. Alvarez' drawing-room, the eighteenth century delicacy of Aunt Alicia's boudoir, Honoré's amusing *art nouveau* bachelor apartment—perfectly evoke their period atmosphere.

Much of the film was shot in Paris, not only exterior locations but also interiors such as the Palais de Glace and Maxim's. All this material is used by Minnelli with sensibility and intelligence. Only once or twice is he betrayed into extravagance, as in the clever yet somehow too tricky staging of the scene in Maxim's. While *Gigi* does not represent a revival of the MGM musical in its heyday, it is a welcome extension of latter-day musical style in its adult subject-matter and its avoidance of spectacle made vulgar by emphasis on size.

DAVID VAUGHAN

ANNA LUCASTA

ANNA LUCASTA (UNITED ARTISTS) has had a bizarre stage and screen history. In both settings it has been played by all-white and all-Negro casts, the latter experiencing most success on stage in both America and England. The author, Philip Yordan, conceived his original work as a domestic comedy-drama about an avaricious family of Polish-Americans who attempt to marry off their youngest member (a loose-moraled but beautiful girl) to a simple but rich agricultural student. The dialogue and action were vivid, and sharply intensified by a faintly incestuous strain involving the heroine and her father.

In Yordan's 1949 screen version of *Anna Lucasta* (with Paulette Goddard) this frail plot-line of filial rehabilitation was too simply motivated to have real force as screen material. It is interesting to note that the current adaptation, again by Yordan and directed by Arnold Laven, arrives during a period of screen renaissance for American Negro actors, and a few comments are relevant. The original, all-Negro production of *Anna Lucasta* (1944) came as a surprise to New York theatre-goers, who suddenly realised that the urban minority population in Northern U.S. areas had been totally overlooked as figures of drama. The absence of deep South accents and Harlem attitudes was a novelty, and the cliché of the wronged prostitute heroine evoked enough pathos to give the play a naive, often moving honesty.

The latest film version lacks these qualities. It includes several aspects of racial stereotyping which were absent from the play, and it is conceived so diffidently as a piece of realistic cinema that it fails to work as either document or drama.



Isabel Jeans, Leslie Caron and Hermione Gingold in "*Gigi*".

It would be well for Hollywood producers to hire an observant and perceptive member of the Negro race (James Baldwin, the novelist, would be my choice) as "technical adviser" on any future films of this kind. For obviously Mr. Yordan has lost control of reality, or is unconcerned about the fact that he is transforming his characters into caricatures of themselves. One feels, too, that the American cinema is still nervously grappling with outmoded censorship codes regarding the depiction of the Negro, so that no matter how realistic a portrayal may be, if any hint of *successful* interracialism is involved either death or emotional chaos must result (*A Man Is Ten Feet Tall*, for example, or *Island in the Sun*).

In all-Negro films, however, this problem is erased and supplanted by that of ingenious miscasting. Let it go on record at this point that America is filled with Negro actors of great talent, highly-trained and otherwise, who are overlooked by film-makers in favour of noted Negro recording artists and night club entertainers. Not willing to believe in the material involved, nor prepared to study the reasons for the stage success of *Anna Lucasta*, the producers of this film cast Eartha Kitt, the most sophisticated Negro café singer of the day, as Anna.

This bore exciting possibilities; but after a stunningly tough and raucous first sequence as a well-adjusted waterfront tart, Miss Kitt is forced to enact a basically good creature who longs to be an unfashionable home-girl, dressed in checked gingham, humming spirituals with her estranged father. It apparently never occurred to anyone that if this performer *should* ever find herself singing a spiritual, she would probably do so in French. Taken away from her particular world of stylised exoticism and polyglot glamour, Eartha Kitt becomes only baffling; and Laven does not understand the range of her personality.

As for the Lucasta family, the element of caricature again destroys conviction. Frederick O'Neal's bombastic brother-in-law, amusing on the stage, becomes vaudeville, lacking depth or contact with reality. Only Isabelle Cooley and Rosetta Le Noire seem aware of their characters, staying totally on key and within their range at all times. Rex Ingram's portrait of Anna's father is incomprehensibly motivated, a mixture of Freudian religiosity and Uncle Remus attitudes that throws the film off balance. There are, however, three contrasting male performances which give the film additional interest, even if they cannot save it. Sammy Davis Jr. as Danny, an ex-sailor and taxi-driver, personifies the big city tempter, full of sour wit and sensuality, appealing to the dormant desires of a reformed harlot. Crude, dynamic and a totally visual performer, he forces one



"A Sunday Romance" : Margit Bara and Ivan Darvas.

to believe in his grotesque, so-called "hip" philosophies, his cynical exasperations, all accented by Elmer Bernstein's jazz tempos. Henry Scott, an actor whose talents have lain fallow in Hollywood for a decade, makes a favourable impression as Anna's naive lover, though the demands placed on him are false. Finally, James Edwards sketches a keenly detailed characterisation of a sinister pander and brings to the memorable bar-room sequence the sense of style that is so wanting in the rest of the film.

Lucien Ballard's photography is at its best during these opening scenes; and, for once, a song heard over the credits does not irritate. Against some camera images of Anna walking disconsolately past the docks and warehouses of nocturnal San Diego, the film establishes a mood promising insights into American Negro life. But these never quite materialise, either as truth or as sheer theatrics.

ALBERT JOHNSON

PAPRIKA and A SUNDAY ROMANCE

THESE TWO FILMS, with which the Hungarian cinema has at long last breached the West End's commercial barriers (though one, *The Iron Flower*, has had to suffer the indignity of being retitled *Paprika—a Waif of Passion*), have several points of contact. Both are literary adaptations. Both are love stories whose conflicts are rooted in class distinction: Vilma, the maid-servant of Imre Fehér's *A Sunday Romance* (Curzon), leaves her beloved when she learns that he is not a private, but a small-town masher; Vera and István, the miserable lovers of János Herskó's *The Iron Flower* (Gala), separate because she—sick of poverty and to realise her dream of becoming a great dancer—becomes the mistress of her employer at the laundry. Both have one main character (Vilma, István) representing the ideal of human dignity, and are melancholy in mood. Finally, both are strong in setting and atmosphere (a small provincial town, an old quarter of Budapest) and in period sense (the beginning of the First World War, the economic crisis of the Thirties).

Herskó's film provides a perfect screen equivalent to Andor

Endre Gelléri's short stories, on which it is based. This is a considerable achievement, as these stories—treasures of Hungarian literature, though unknown abroad—depict the life of strange, very poor people in terms that are oblique, almost abstract. Gelléri's world is one of mysterious voices, dreams, illusions; the very admixture of the words "Iron" and "Flower" cannot be easily transferred to the imagination of the reader to the definitions of the screen. Herskó's direction communicates the quality of the original by his fluent handling of the slow and novelettish story, and by capturing and sustaining its allusiveness—except when occasional overplaying or virtuoso cutting give an impression of straining after effect. Otherwise there is a skilful use of visual detail (the little stove and the mirror in the hut, the laundry's rubber hoses) and sound effects. The cold noises of factories and work are offset by the finely human performances of Mari Töröcsik and Zoltán Várkonyi, as a rather sad seducer, so that the film takes on a soft and tender glow, beautifully caught by Ferenc Szécsényi's camerawork. This is in direct contrast to Herskó's previous film, his first—an emotionally false and bloated propagandist melodrama on the building of the Budapest underground, banned soon after it became clear that the underground was an economic failure. In this context, Herskó's new, and in effect his first, film has an added significance, familiar from recent developments in Poland and Russia: at the first sign of political relaxation, and with the eclipse of film dictators like Chiaureli or Márton Keleti in Hungary, younger talents emerge to seize and foster the excitement of a country's artistic reappraisal.

A Sunday Romance is Fehér's first picture, mature and self-assured in its elegant sophistication, yet natural in its simplicity. The original title, *In Private's Uniform*, seems an apt description of Fehér himself: a straightforward and reliable common soldier who wins his first battle. He handles the touching love story with a fine irony, well balanced against the satirically observed small town background, and faltering only in the middle, when some episodes—though beautiful in themselves—slow down the main narrative. Nevertheless this is a tasteful and notably personal first film.

Herskó and Fehér bring something new to the West: a racy yet tender and refined humanism; an uprightness imparting much that is pure and fresh about human feelings and relationships. On a level with the best Hungarian films, from *A Piece of Land to Merry Go Round*, these two works have in addition a difference of approach towards old themes, and the excitement of an artist's struggle to express a style and a personality. There are moments of awkwardness and rigidity, hints of Ophüls or Carné, and possibly less of that exotic virtuosity one has found in recent Polish features. Yet this is above all a sympathetic kind of film-making, on a European level. It asks to be watched and taken seriously.

ROBERT VAS

SEPARATE TABLES

ON THE STAGE, TERENCE Rattigan's *Separate Tables* was actually two one-act plays providing a field-day for Eric Portman and Margaret Leighton, who played the four main parts and gave their basically synthetic material a strong electrical impulse. Hecht, Hill and Lancaster's screen version (United Artists) has thrown this duo gimmick overboard and gone all out for the unities and claustrophobic tension. Closely adapted by Rattigan and John Gay, the film covers dinner, breakfast and eleven lives at a Bournemouth hotel. In the foreground is the relationship of Sibyl Railton-Bell, all tics and pre-therapy *Now Voyager*, and Major Pollock, a shy lonely fraud arrested for changing his seat once too often in a local cinema, now dovetailed with the re-encounter of drunken writer John Malcom and the frigid ex-wife he once tried to murder. In the background is a familiar cross-section of Tennent-types: an old pedant, a horsey spinster, a vague lady, two dim young things presumably standing for yardstick normality, the landlady in love with Malcom, and Sibyl's appalling mother.

Here and there, the suspense of the original works. One can derive a disgusting amount of pleasure from watching other people's troubles, especially if they are sexual, and the moment Mrs. Railton-Bell begins busily closing all the doors prior to sitting in judgment on the Major, one's eyes are glued to the

keyhole. As time runs out, however, and the lodgers begin rushing into the night, collapsing on the stairs, having hysterics in the conservatory and sobering talks over the kippers, it becomes only too apparent that we are watching nothing more edifying, dramatically speaking, than a blown fuse. The trouble is not so much that Rattigan is shamelessly giving the public twice its money's worth, as that he has left himself no time to resolve his characters' problems feasibly. All the right things are being said, of course (loneliness is awful, tolerance is nice, turning the tables on mother is even nicer); and the film's implication, that life in a Bournemouth boarding-house is rather like reading *The News of the World*, may well be so. But because Rattigan here cares more for theatrical effects than human beings, the implication is assumed in headlines rather than established: his grey little world of failure remains obstinately out of touch with reality.

The director is Delbert Mann, whose part in the proceedings is ambiguous, to say the least. It seems just possible, judging by the intensity he brings to the better scenes, that he sees his material potentially as Bournemouth's *Marty*. But this is hard to reconcile with Vic Damone's voice over the credits throbbing out a theme song, or with a score encouraged to explode at times of crisis. Finally there is the casting. It ranges from serviceable Shaftesbury Avenue (Cathleen Nesbitt's Lady Matheson, the quiet feeling of Wendy Hiller as the proprietress) to *Now Voyager* pyrotechnics (Deborah Kerr's cringing Sibyl, the superb playing of Mrs. Railton-Bell by Gladys Cooper's right eyebrow) and the hopeless misplacement of the Hollywood couple, Burt Lancaster and Rita Hayworth. Left unclassifiably to the last is David Niven—by no means the likeliest choice for an inhibited and unattractive old blusterer, but acting with such intelligence, feeling and uncanny intuition that at least something remains to glow, with the warmth of real life, long after the lights have fused.

PETER JOHN DYER

THE LAST HURRAH

AS ONE GETS OLDER, and the feeling increases that one has seen it all before, there seems to be only one thing left that can justify an abiding concern with the cinema: I mean its poetry.

Of course films are useful for relaxation too, to drop into like hot baths, or to dip into like boxes of Black Magic when

childish yearnings or insecurities demand appeasement—"distracted from distraction by distraction." But what a pretence, what a waste of time most of it is: the puffed-up, Oscared war-film with the clever orchestration; the fine comic novel dwindled into a facetious scamper; the comedies without style and the dramas without sense. Occasionally (very occasionally now) there is the "entertainment" that really entertains, and we are grateful. But poetry is what we want. And, from Ford at least, it's hard to be satisfied with less.

I must make this point clearly because it is true that, on an indulgent level, *The Last Hurrah* (Columbia) is quite a pleasing film. It is clean, unvulgar and well-made; its values are decent and friendly; it has some sympathetic, if familiar, satire at the expense of some objectionable modern attitudes; its sentiment is strong, traditional and unashamed. It contrasts, in other words, very favourably with most Hollywood films just now, and particularly with the pretentious efforts of other senior American directors.

The trouble, though, with *The Last Hurrah* is that it relates so closely to the work that has earned Ford his great name, that considerably higher expectations are aroused. But not fulfilled. Somehow the feeling that similar themes have evoked from him in the past remains absent. In fact, this seems to me a far less satisfying film than the much-scorned *Gideon's Day*—that eccentric, wholly characteristic *divertissement*, as Fordian in its contempt for convention and propriety as in its humorous, masterly vigour. There was no great elevation of aim there, of course; whereas *The Last Hurrah* has a subject. The old politician fights his last election. Humane, personal paternalism is pitted against modern efficiency, corruption and pseudo-democracy. A last effort; a last good deed; integrity is beaten at the polls, yet morally triumphs. Ford has done all this once (though Judge Priest won his election), in *The Sun Shines Bright*. Would that he had done it again! But the poetry has gone.

What do we mean by poetry? We mean intensity, emotional force, compression of style, that glow of imagination and feeling that transforms fact into symbol, story into myth. "Every good man's life," said Keats, "is a continual allegory." This is true of Ford's Wyatt Earp, his Nathan Brittles and his little Billy Priest. But it is not true of his Skeffington. *The Last Hurrah* remains stuck at the literal, anecdotal level: and unfortunately on this level it does not really work. The background is too sketchy, the script too thin, the characterisation too perfunctory. Who is this Skeffington? As presented in this film it is difficult to understand the horror with which he is regarded by the Roman clergy. Why does he lose the election? How could he possibly be defeated by his transparent clown of an opponent? (Ford likes using his friends, we know, even if it does result in bad performances. It is difficult to forgive him this one, by Maureen O'Hara's brother.) The shooting is correspondingly uneven: some masterly stuff at the election headquarters; some well composed (though cold) stuff for the defeat and the death; but too many sequences just put dully before us, without involvement.

Why is the temperature so low? Partly perhaps because of Spencer Tracy. This performance has some brilliant little bits and the usual effortless authority; but it lacks warmth. Anyway, fine actor though Tracy can be, he is not a Fordian. He is a characteriser, not a self-revealer; lacking in simplicity; realistic and psychological rather than moral and poetic. (He was far better in Capra's *State of the Union*, far more suited.) This is not, however, to fault Tracy exactly: he would have played Skeffington very well—in another director's film. For, in spite of appearances and similarities, *The Last Hurrah* was not right for Ford. Twenty years ago, perhaps, but now he is impatient with narrative, realism, and above all with the present. He should be making allegories, fairy stories, poems. And another thing—he should lay off the Irish-Catholicism. Let him get back to the Protestant west, where he belongs.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

The artist and the doctors: a scene from Anthony Asquith's version of Shaw's "The Doctor's Dilemma".



In Brief

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA (*M.G.M.*) has the inestimable advantage of Cecil Beaton's costumes and Paul Sheriff's art direction, which frame the rickety old (1906) conversation piece like ormolu round a miniature. Needless to say the whole thing is in impeccable taste—especially the clutter of Dubedat's studio—which would have appealed to Shaw's ironic intelligence: the debunking of doctors and the weighing of the hero's immorality against his genius were originally intended as the height of shocking bad taste. But since the shock wore off a good many years ago, and since the play's situation of the artist-criminal murdered by middle-class morality no longer seems to work itself out convincingly, it is difficult to share Anthony Asquith's obviously warm enthusiasm for the project. Certainly it presents a challenge (not met) and an opportunity for actors (partly met). The challenge is the structural conflict between the satirical comedy of Harley Street and the tragedy of Dubedat's death. Actually it is the playing which disturbs the balance. The beautifully written death scene extracts a maturity and subtlety of emotion quite new in Dirk Bogarde's repertoire, and his success is matched by Leslie Caron's equally unexpected depth of intelligence and feeling. Instead of an intellectual's notion of a romantic hero and a charming heroine, Bogarde and Caron present the suggestion of a life-absorbing artist and a woman of extraordinary perception. Their tragedy becomes touchingly real (it even survives Dubedat's ghostly voice over the soundtrack in the closing scenes) and the comedy descends by comparison to a level of rather repulsive cuteness. Within their familiar styles Alastair Sim (Cutler Walpole) and Robert Morley (Bloomfield-Bonington) are effective enough, considering how inept so much of their dialogue now sounds; but the tragedy of Sir Colenso Ridgeon, which is no less significant than that of the artist, is totally missing in John Robinson's nicely articulated, hollow performance.—PETER JOHN DYER.

★

THE ROOTS OF HEAVEN (*Fox*) must be John Huston's most exasperating oddity. He was, it seems, genuinely attracted to the subject; but—assuming the adaptation by Romain Gary and Patrick Leigh-Fermor is faithful to Gary's original—it is difficult to see precisely what appeal it could hold for a director of Huston's temperament. The story, as told on the screen, is startlingly meaningless. Morel, obsessed by a desire to stop the slaughter of elephants, takes to the jungle when his petitions are ridiculed. Following the publicity given to him by an American television commentator whom he shoots in the bottom, he is joined by several followers. They include Waitari, leader of an African nationalist organisation which uses Morel's elephant as a symbol; a cynical tusk dealer; a Danish naturalist; and a monocled, impeccably dressed German who has refused to speak any of the seventeen languages in which he is fluent until man begins to behave more humanely.

This would seem a bizarre enough assortment to offer even Huston plenty of scope. But soon a French prostitute and a drunken British ex-officer with a guilty secret are added to the roster and, after a few propaganda sorties and an expedition involving the public spanking of a woman big game hunter, an American photo-journalist literally crashes in. The pay-off finally comes when Morel, expecting to be arrested by a local administrator, is instead saluted. The official, a lingering close-up has shown us, has just been studying a magazine feature on nuclear warfare which suggests that mankind may soon wipe itself out. Morel staggers back into the bush; and the American, shedding cameras containing his exclusive news story at every step, follows him in the absurdly inconclusive final shot.

The film's most infuriating quality is its incoherent pretentiousness. Weighty hints are periodically dropped that Morel's concern for the animal kingdom—"starting with the elephants," as he frequently insists—points the road to saner thinking in a nuclear age. Yet early in his rounds with his petition a priest accuses him of turning to animals out of a dislike for humanity, and the accuracy of this charge is always evident. All the praise for Morel's sincerity seems pointless, for his ideals are unacceptable and his followers either opportunists or eccentrics.

The production, by Darryl Zanuck, is glossily managed, with several moments of typical Huston display. But every time there is an issue to be faced, a principle to be established or a

motivation to be explained, the film shies timidly away. No amount of polish can hide the empty centre or, for that matter, the ramshackle construction.

Only Trevor Howard could have made the unplayable part of Morel as supportable as it is here. The other principals—Juliette Greco, Errol Flynn, Eddie Albert—are less capable of saving their equally ill-written roles. But Orson Welles makes an extremely funny appearance in the guest star part of the television personality, and Eddic Connor manages to give Waitari considerable conviction.—DEREK HILL.

★

The new **39 STEPS** (*Rank*) is inevitably overshadowed by memories of the Hitchcock original. Here again are the woman agent with the knife in her back; the spy masquerading as a Scottish laird, with gunmanship over the Sunday tea-cups; the handcuffed pursuit across the moors, and the close-ups of the dying Mr. Memory, mumbling out the secret formula against a background of jiggling chorus girls. Although Frank Harvey's script provides some innovations (the political meeting into which Hannay erupts has become a girls' school lecture, introducing a St. Trinian's touch), it owes far more to the first screen version than to Buchan's novel. The differences, of course, come with the treatment. Ralph Thomas, the director, intermittently tries for Hitchcock's particular blend of the sinister and the comic; and he pulls out one trick, when a pram blanket is drawn back to reveal not a baby but a pistol, entirely worthy of this tradition. But on the whole he has broadened the story, allowed Kenneth More to play for hearty comedy, and in one incident, with Brenda de Banzie's man-eating spiritualist replacing Peggy Ashcroft's pathetic cottager's wife, strayed too far towards caricature for its own sake. Never a subtle film-maker, he concerns himself mainly with keeping the action moving. And this treatment, even though not entirely satisfactory, is perhaps now a necessary one. The original film came out of a fantasy spy world of criminal master-minds and "secret plans" on whose ownership hinged the fate of the world. Now, even when filmed largely for comedy, it cannot but look like a period piece. *The 39 Steps* also provides a good deal of Scottish scenery, shot in Eastman Colour, and rather an overload of character acting from the small part players. As an entertainment, it must be admitted, it comes off better than Hitchcock's own jaded remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

★

THE BLACK ORCHID (*Paramount*) is the story of a gangster's young widow, played with spirit and understanding by Sophia Loren, who is left guilt-ridden and poor in a lonely house in the Italian quarter of New York. Her working days are spent making artificial flowers, her weekends in visiting her son on a state farm for juvenile delinquents. When she falls cautiously in love with an equally lonely widower, it is not the son who creates the painful tensions of the second half of the film, but the widower's daughter—a bitterly resentful girl who attempts to blackmail her father by locking herself in her room for days at a time. The loneliness of the inarticulate is a subject one is only too familiar with these days, but it is handled here with an evident affection for the characters and a deliberately tenuous narrative style suggesting a mature extension to Martin Ritt's previously rather unrelaxed talent.

For once poverty and guilt and loneliness are treated quietly and with humour, with none of that suspicious "poetry of the common people" owing more to heightened dialogue than to natural observation. Only towards the end does Ritt's notorious bad luck or judgment, where his scripts are concerned, lead to absurd over-simplification. The daughter's threatened insanity (inherited from her mother, we are told, until the suggestion is quickly dropped in favour of a tidy dénouement) and the boy's escape from the farm, produce some tedious melodrama which all but invalidates the sincerity of the earlier scenes. Fortunately Ritt's concentration on his players pulls the film through its sticky patches. Sophia Loren, perhaps an underrated actress, gives her best performance yet, Anthony Quinn is enormously likeable as the widower, and his scenes with the boy (Jimmy Baird) are quite touching. A largely unknown supporting cast is admirable, and Alessandro Cicognini's bitter-sweet score is most appropriate.—PETER JOHN DYER.

TOPICAL TELEVISION



DEREK
HILL



Discussion feature : Granada's "Under Fire".

MICHAEL INGRAMS, at the conclusion of a *Look In* discussion: "There obviously is a problem here. What have we learnt? That women are at the height of their powers at this age; that employers, maybe through ignorance, are not offering them opportunities; and that society needs to think about this problem. Write and tell me what you think. I shan't be able to use your ideas in this programme because next week it comes from Africa."

Ludovic Kennedy, concluding *This Week's* presentation of the case for unilateral disarmament: "You may disagree with everything that's been said here tonight, but at least we hope it's given you something to think about and talk over. Next week we'll be covering just as fully the case against nuclear disarmament. Now we'll be back again in just two minutes with some rabbits."

* * *

Picture Post ceased publication with a circulation of 738,739; the last figure issued for *Illustrated* before it became amalgamated with *John Bull* was 444,219*. Allowing three readers per copy and ignoring duplicate readership, the total number of readers of these popular weeklies was well below four million. Today *This Week* claims over nine million viewers, *Panorama* eight million and *Tonight* seven million. *The Listener* has 750,000 readers; *Monitor* has 2,250,000 viewers. *Discovery* has 100,000 readers; the last of the *New Horizon* series was seen by 3,330,000.

The two illustrated weeklies were obviously more directly challenged by television than other magazines. But even where TV commentaries on current affairs, arts and sciences are not replacing magazine coverage, they are clearly dwarfing it. The responsibilities are already huge, and promise to multiply. How are they being faced?

* Audit Bureau of Circulation figures.

The BBC and ITV are, as I write, putting out twenty-six different series of programmes which can be broadly classed as topical television, the majority of them transmitted every week. The sheer quantity of material which attempts to tackle important subject matter is at first glance impressive. Fifteen of the 26 series are BBC programmes. As several of these are only shown fortnightly, and the eleven ITV series are almost all weekly transmissions, this may seem a pretty fair balance. In fact, closer comparison shows that the BBC gives its more seriously intentioned programmes not merely more than twice the time but a greater share of the peak viewing period, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The average time of ITV's topical series totals less than four hours per week, with only one programme, *This Week*, shown during peak hours. The BBC average approaches nine hours a week, with six series transmitted during the most popular period.

On the whole, there seems to be less calculated clashing of similar programmes on the rival channels than with variety or drama. Associated-Rediffusion's challenge to *Panorama* is the popular Western *Wagon Train*. The BBC usually have variety or drama while *This Week* is being transmitted. The most blatant exception is ITV's attempt at winning the huge audience from *Tonight*, presented every weekday evening from 6.45 to 7.30. On four days out of five, programmes aimed at a similar audience begin five minutes earlier on the rival channel—*Right to Reply*, *Look In*, *Roving Report* and *We Want an Answer*. (The same period on the fifth evening is occupied by an advertising magazine.) These programmes all end as the peak period begins, and crime series, Westerns or variety take over.

Both channels crib ideas fairly frequently from each other. *Panorama* obviously inspired *This Week*. Granada's *Under Fire* led to the BBC's almost indistinguishable *Who Goes Home?* Comparisons of discussion and science programmes also indicate the eagerness to cash in on a rival

success. The only original programmes in this field which remain unique are *What the Papers Say*, *Second Enquiry* and Ed Murrow's *Small World*, itself an American import.

2

The most consistently successful programmes are those able to devote all their time to exploring a single subject or personality. *Second Enquiry*, the BBC programme which looks at problems shown in the *Special Enquiry* series six years ago to check the progress made, is so genuinely concerned with most of the subjects it tackles that its thirty minutes seems an unkind limitation. When the programme recently conducted a forceful investigation into progress in Glasgow housing, its apparently optimistic conclusion was repeatedly interrupted, even after the closing credits, with shocking reminders of what remained to be done. This wasn't just a stunt—it conveyed a real reluctance to let the matter drop.

Lifeline, a BBC series concerned with psychiatric and allied problems, is confined to the studio; but it has the same determination to probe as thoroughly into its subject as half-an-hour allows. The anonymous consultant psychiatrist who conducts this series is less concerned with display and more engrossed with his subject than any other interviewer television has yet produced. The success of such programmes as those on flogging and mental illness is as much due to his exceptional firmness and lucidity as to Hugh Burnett's controlled production.

Burnett was also responsible for the first *Face to Face*, in which John Freeman, another first-rate interviewer, tackled Lord Birkett. Thirty minutes of studio interview may sound poor television; in fact, as this programme proved, it can be compelling and, even with a wily subject, revealing. Another Burnett production, *Press Conference*, again gives thirty minutes to the cross-examination of one person, though the use of a team of journalists leads to questioning which is inevitably more diffuse and less cumulatively penetrating than with a single interviewer.

None of the current ITV series devotes half an hour to a single topic, though the success of Bronowski's *New Horizons* should surely have demonstrated the value of this approach. The nearest equivalent at the moment is Associated-Rediffusion's *Success Story* series. Dan Farson is increasingly inclined to dominate the people he interviews in these programmes, and seems to reserve his more challenging questions for the safest subjects. But a lesson made clear by nearly all these series is underlined. At its most direct, as in the interview with Shelagh Delaney (admittedly a natural screen personality), television is at its best; nervous attempts to make such material "visual" are frequently damaging. The gimmick-ridden *Success Story* on Hank Janson, complete with interview with a masked figure in a Soho bar and intercut striptease dancers, was a supremely lunatic case in point.

At their best, all these series owe part of their success to the fact that they make points, present cases and come to conclusions. They are among the few programmes that are truly informative.

When *Panorama* or *This Week* present a genuinely controversial subject, they almost always adopt the familiar formula of equally timed statements by two opposite extremes. We get the case for and against the re-nationalisation of steel, and then the inevitable, "We must now leave it to the electors to take up the argument." But it isn't even the last item in the programme...

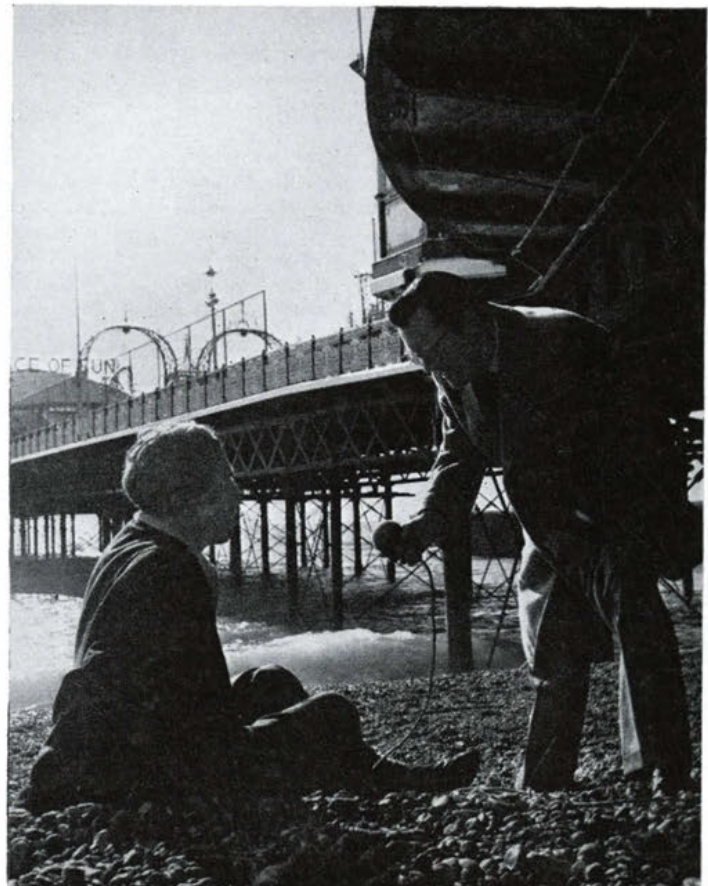
Ludovic Kennedy introduced one of *This Week's* longest features with the warning that the cold war is being replaced by an economic war. Fifteen minutes later, after a telephone

call to Moscow, an interview with the London correspondent of *Pravda*, and countless newsreel shots and stills, he summed up: "If the cold war is going to be replaced by an economic war then we've got to be prepared to adjust, and if it's not a change and the cold war is going to continue then we'd better be prepared for that too." And this is as near to a conclusion as these programmes generally get.

Both *Panorama* and *This Week* feature comperes and interviewers so uncommitted that they seem inhuman. The implication is that there are two *equally valid* sides to every question. Presented in this way, discussions are likely to become sterile entertainment items which, far from stimulating further argument and thought among viewers, seem more likely to suggest that with so much to be said for both sides it doesn't really matter which gets its way.

There are, of course, exceptions. Richard Dimbleby's outburst during the feature on Cuba—"What on earth were we doing supplying arms to a bloodthirsty tin-pot little dictator like Batista?"—is probably the most famous simply because it was so much out of character. But in the circumstances it was hardly as courageous as it seemed. Basically it wouldn't offend that man in the street whom Dimbleby, Kennedy and the rest of them affect to represent.

The real aggressiveness, though, is reserved for people who hold minority views. Dimbleby, for instance, can freely allow himself to express distaste for the principles of Jehovah's Witnesses. *This Week* recently had Ludovic Kennedy carefully balancing three points for unilateral nuclear disarmament against three points for retention; but a few minutes later a mother who wanted to see toys representing war weapons banned by law was being attacked by an interviewer with a rare display of courage. "You don't let your son play with guns?" he demanded incredulously. "Don't you realise you've cut him off from an enormous part of life?" The woman's arguments, it was safe to suppose, were new to most viewers and could easily be



A "Tonight" reporter conducting an interview on the beach at Brighton.

made to seem absurd; therefore she could safely be attacked not only by the toy manufacturer brought in to 'balance' her case, but also by the interviewer.

Tonight, despite its childish calypsos and studio high jinks, is often more enterprising than *Panorama* or *This Week*. It gave Sir David Robertson an opportunity to explain the case for an investigation into the John Waters affair before it had been decided to hold an enquiry. It featured an attack on the damage aspirin can do to the stomach which must have upset several big commercial interests. In neither case were the statements "balanced" by spokesmen for the opposite viewpoint.

But such examples remain rare. *Tonight* is an unpredictable programme. Even on its lightest level, it is capable at one moment of the extremely funny film of the Honourable Artillery Company's preparations to fire the Tower cannon ("It must be nice for old Macmillan to know we can negotiate from strength") and at the next of Geoffrey Johnson Smith's commentary against film of the Treetops Hotel in Nairobi: "We're told that many animals turned up in the first hour that the Queen Mother watched last night, as if somehow conscious of the occasion."

In one field, though, topical television has been direct, firm and effective. *Panorama* and *This Week* both from time to time expose some common swindle and advise viewers how to protect themselves against it. *Look In*, too, recently offered advice on the action to take if one failed to get value for money—but, typically, the item involved Michael Ingrams selling pound notes in the street at half-a-crown each.

3

The best of TV's discussion programmes, *Small World*, offers further proof of the values of simplicity. For all the complications of the sound hook-up which enables three or four people in different continents to discuss a common interest, the result on the screen seems as direct as any studio programme. But the fact that the material shown represents probably the best quarter of what has been recorded, and the facilities of the film recording which enable the producers to cut from face to face at the most expressive moment, help to maintain this series at an astonishingly high level.

The rest of television's discussion programmes are an unrewarding lot. The BBC's *Brains Trust*, that strange club with its windows shut and door barricaded against the outside world, is as empty as ITV's *Free Speech*, where political discussion is replaced by sneers and bombast. *Right to Reply*, by the time the commercials and opening and closing announcements have eaten into its twenty minutes, has time for little more than the usual opposing statements by both sides. Time is invariably up while the parties are still reconnoitring.

Look In, another twenty minute programme, suffers from the same problem, but its real weakness is its uncertainty of purpose. Until recently it was billed in the *TV Times* as: "Look In with Michael Ingrams. What? A personal view of life. When? Every week at this time. How? Live cameras; film cameras. Where? Wherever the story is. Why? Why not?" And this is very much the mood it reflects. *Under Fire* and *Who Goes Home?* in which members of the public question two M.P.s, are usually conducted on the same level as *Free Speech*. The assumption is that the more questions, the fuller the coverage; and the impression is one of belligerent, unthinking haste.

Specialist reporting is best exemplified in the scientific programmes *Science is News* and *Eye on Research*, both generally lucid and direct—though neither quite equals the standard set by *New Horizons*. *Roving Report*, an ITN production, occasionally spreads itself to two issues on the same subject, but its standard is very variable. A recent report on Egypt compressed documentary material and



"Success Story": Daniel Farson conducts an interview in a Soho bar.

interviews into a taut, effective programme which concluded with a pointed summary of the country's immediate problems. A week later, a programme called *Do the French Like Us?* gave half its time to finding out whether the British tourist would get more this year for his money, and petered out with a gabbled commentary on the French economy over quite meaningless street scenes.

The first *Who Cares?*, a series on the appearance of town and country, showed so little real concern with its subject that it could scarcely begin to communicate a sense of importance. The first of the BBC's *Cinema Today* series, on the other hand, adopted an aloof tone which suggested that its report on the Italian cinema was something strictly for the initiated. It scarcely attempted to set the scene, scampered through lists of directors which must have mystified the majority of viewers, and even insisted on referring to almost every film by its original Italian title.

Potentially one of TV's most promising series, Granada's *What the Papers Say* actually demonstrates several common attitudes. Imagine the programme this could be if its subject—the different treatment given by various newspapers to the week's news—were given to a Richard Hoggart or a Raymond Williams. Instead, it is offered to working journalists, few of whom have so far treated it as more than an opportunity for superficial comparisons. Brian Inglis, for instance, seems preoccupied with differences in layout and the sizes of photographs. J. P. W. Mallalieu was until recently almost equally concerned with trivia; but in one or two programmes lately he has taken his subject seriously enough to arrive at some vigorous and sometimes valuable conclusions.

Generally speaking, though, this series seems reluctant to suggest that its subject has any real importance for or influence over the people who are watching. It also displays the nervousness typical of most seriously intentioned programmes on the commercial channels. The programme is "brightened" by having newspaper extracts not merely shown but simultaneously read, and not merely read but read by actors who give comic inflections to match the style of the

(Continued on page 103)

Face to Face:

JAMES AGEE

by RICHARD ROUD



James Agee (centre) on the set of "Face to Face". Agee adapted a Stephen Crane story for this film and appeared briefly as an actor.

Shortly before Christmas two volumes of collected criticism were published, one in America, one in France: AGEE ON FILM and volume one of the late André Bazin's QU'EST-CE QUE LE CINEMA? Collected film criticism of permanent value is rare; and these books bring into sharp focus the work of two writers belonging to different traditions, confronting different problems. Apart from their intrinsic value, the collections present us with a revealing contrast in critical attitudes. An article on the work of André Bazin will appear in the Summer number of SIGHT AND SOUND.

THE PUBLISHERS OF AGEE ON FILM have printed as preface a letter written by W. H. Auden to the editor of *The Nation*:

I do not care for movies very much, and I rarely see them... I am all the more surprised, therefore, to find myself not only reading Mr. Agee before I read anyone else in *The Nation* but also consciously looking forward all week to reading him again... What he says is of such profound interest, expressed with such extraordinary wit and felicity, and so transcends its ostensible—to me, rather unimportant—subject, that his articles belong in that very select class... of newspaper work which has permanent literary value.

This was surely meant as the highest of tributes. Yet it posits an idea of the function of the film critic which is not so very different from that of the editor of one famous London newspaper—who is said to ask of his movie critics only that they provide enough of the plot and enough amusing remarks to furnish those who have not seen the film with a reasonable supply of cocktail chatter. In a sense, of course, this idea of the film review is but a debased continuation of the genteel tradition of the irresponsible, whimsical and impressionistic essayist.

Auden was not James Agee's only admirer. A considerable Agee cult grew up during the years of his *Nation* reviews. One heard—at least, the late George Barbarow heard—"many a happy moron proclaim that he would rather read an Agee review than see the picture." (*Partisan Review*). Naturally, the cult provoked an answering reaction. Agee was deprecated for his habit of occasionally spending more space on bad films than on good ones, because the bad gave him more opportunities to write amusingly. His style sometimes ran away with him, as in the following breathless excerpt from his notice on a film called *Carnival in Costa Rica*:

If this sort of un-American propaganda takes decent hold in Hollywood, the day will come when the husband of a high-bridged daughter of the Confederacy will shag into the scuppernong arbor playing ootchmagootch to a slice of watermelon and reciting *Ballad for Americans*, between spat seeds, in an Oxford accent.

Agee was no funnier than Otis Ferguson (see Ferguson's description of how to make a "montage film" in *Garbo and the Nightwatchmen*). He was occasionally less incisive than Robert Warshaw (compare their reviews of *The Best Years of Our Lives*). He was less interestingly "offbeat" than Manny Farber. But he was America's best film critic, because he combined acute intelligence with a passion for the best the cinema could do. And he was able to communicate his enthusiasm.

* * *

James Agee was born in 1910 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Educated at Harvard, he began life as a writer. In the 'thirties he published a book of poems, *Permit Me Voyage*, and a study of Southern sharecroppers, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. But his interest in the cinema went back to his childhood: in his novel *A Death in the Family*, he movingly describes his father and himself (mother didn't approve) going off to see Chaplin and Mack Sennett at the local movie house. One of his finest essays, "Comedy's Greatest Era" (first published in *Life*), lovingly evokes the peculiar pleasure that Lloyd, Langdon, Keaton and Chaplin were capable of giving. It is a very nostalgic but careful analysis of exactly how during those years slapstick attained the greatness of art:

The early silent comedians never strove for or consciously thought of anything which could be called artistic "form", but they achieved it... Leo McCarey once devoted almost the whole of a Laurel and Hardy two-reeler to pie-throwing. The first pies were thrown thoughtfully, almost philosophically. Then innocent bystanders began to get caught into the vortex. At full pitch it was Armageddon. But everything was calculated so nicely that until late in the picture, when havoc took over, every pie made its special kind of point and piled on its special kind of laugh.

James Agee began to review films regularly for *Time* in 1941, and for *The Nation* (vaguely equivalent to *The New Statesman*) in 1942. *The Nation* allowed him greater freedom and an opportunity for a more personal expression of his views. In his first column, he set forth his basic creed: "I can begin by describing my condition as a would-be critic. I suspect that I am, far more than not, in your own situation: deeply interested in moving pictures, considerably experienced from childhood in watching them

and thinking and talking about them, and totally, or almost totally, without experience or even much second-hand knowledge of how they are made."

What is fascinating to watch, as one goes through *Agee on Film*, is the way in which the critic became steadily more interested in "how they are made." By the time he wrote his essay on John Huston for *Life* (1950), his knowledge and understanding of film technique was explicit:

The shots are cantilevered, sprung together in electric arcs, rather than buttered together. A given scene is apt to be composed of highly unconventional alternations of rhythm and patterns of exchange between long and medium and close shots and the standing, swinging and dollying camera. The rhythm and contour are very powerful but very irregular, like the rhythm of good prose rather than of good verse; and it is this rangy, leaping, thrusting kind of nervous vitality which binds the whole picture together.

But technique was still only important in a human context. Agee felt very strongly that the cinema was the perfect medium for realism raised to the level of high poetry. He complained that few Americans either behind or in front of the camera gave evidence of any recognition or respect for themselves or one another as human beings. And he judged films against the standards of what he would have called the great humanists of the cinema: Griffith, Chaplin, Eisenstein, Dovzhenko and Vigo. Agee was "an agnostic in politics," but his comments on *Open City* show his thorough-going awareness of the political implications of art:

I cannot help doubting that the basic and ultimate practising motives of institutional Christianity and leftism can be adequately represented by the most magnanimous individuals of each kind; and in that degree I am afraid that both the religious and the leftist audience—and more particularly the religio-leftists, who must be the key mass in Italy—are being sold something of a bill of goods.

Agee was very much affected by the war. He was keenly aware of his own position as a non-combatant in a New York office, and this may have led him to over-rate certain war films because they "helped to diminish the astronomical abyss which exists between the experienced and the inexperienced in war." Thus, he could write of *The Story of G.I. Joe*, "if by any chance this film is not a masterpiece, then however stupid my feeling is, I cannot help resenting those films which are."

But Agee, like every critic, was also influenced by the public for whom he wrote and the milieu in which he lived. He waged a constant battle against other American critics such as Bosley Crowther (*New York Times*), and against the prevalent American "middlebrow-highbrow" approach to the cinema. He overrated Rouquier's *Farrebique* (comparing it with Homer, Hesiod and Virgil) partly because he was so angered by Crowther's comment that *Farrebique* "was lacking in strong dramatic punch... not even a plain folk triangle." On the other hand, his reaction against other New York critics prompted Agee's most brilliant piece of sustained critical writing—his courageous and perceptive defence of *Monsieur Verdoux*.

Unfortunately, this necessary running battle against the middlebrow-highbrows took up a great deal of space; and in a column in which he glanced at *Shadow of a Doubt* in six lines, he devoted sixty-three to Dieterle's *Tennessee Johnson*:

...Another of those screen biographies for which thousands of cultivated people will lay aside *Jalna* for an evening because they like to feel benevolent towards a really good movie... I have given perhaps exorbitant space to *Tennessee Johnson* because it furnishes, for many, the illusion that Hollywood is "coming of age",

and because a lifetime subscription to the *Atlantic Monthly* does not seem to me synonymous with "coming of age".

Agee was also bothered by the fact that so many people who thought of themselves as serious-minded and progressive thoroughly disapproved of crime melodramas. They seem not to realise, he said, that for years so much has been forbidden or otherwise made impossible in Hollywood that crime offers one of the few chances of getting any sort of vitality on the screen.

The careful reader will note discrepancies between Agee's reviews of, say, *Henry V* and *Hamlet* in *The Nation* and those in *Time*. For *Time* he wrote 'selling notices', because he thought that both films ought to be seen by as many people as possible. In *The Nation*, with its infinitely smaller circulation, he felt able to express his doubts and reservations more fully. Again, the problems are those which confront any critic in a society not basically disposed to take the cinema seriously.

One must also remember that if Agee wrote somewhat infrequently about European films, it was because his knowledge of them was necessarily limited. European pictures often take a long time to reach America, and Agee never mentioned films like *Partie de Campagne*, *Douce*, or *Bataille du Rail* because they were not shown in New York until after 1948, when he gave up reviewing to go to Hollywood. When *L'Atalante* and *Zéro de Conduite* were given their New York premiere (in 1947!), however, he recognised them for the great films they are. On the other hand, too many of the serious American critics are generally contemptuous of American movies. One of Agee's greatest services was to point out that "most of the really good popular art produced anywhere comes from Hollywood"; and, he added, "much of it bears John Huston's name." When Agee left New York, it was to write for Huston the script of *The African Queen*. Huston, however, did not use all of his script; and it was for other directors that Agee was able to do his best creative writing in the cinema: *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky* (part of *Face to Face*) and *The Night of the Hunter*, one of the most poetic and perceptive films to have come out of Hollywood since the war. From his beginning, as a critic who knew little of the



Shelley Winters and Robert Mitchum in "Night of the Hunter".

making of films, he had moved steadily towards the creative centre.

James Agee died in 1955. Two years later, his novel *A Death in the Family* was published and won the Pulitzer Prize. On reviewing it, we are told, many critics called for a volume which would bring together his writings on the movies. *Agee on Film* handsomely answers this demand, though it seems a pity the publishers have not taken more trouble in editing Agee's writings. They have reprinted the two essays from *Life*, a selection of the *Time* reviews, two miscellaneous essays, and *The Nation* articles complete—including misprints and subsequent apologies for misprints.

They have managed to introduce misprints of their own, like "nymph in thy prisons (*sic*) be all my sins remembered." Unkindest cut of all, however, is the reference to SIGHT AND SOUND as a British magazine "now defunct." Nevertheless, they have made Agee's writings on the cinema available to the world; and *Agee on Film* now takes its place among the dozen or so books essential to anyone for whom the cinema is not "a rather unimportant subject."

AGEE ON FILM. (McDowell, Obolensky. New York. \$6.00. Available in Britain at 45s.)

Book Reviews

TELEVISION, CINEMA AND CHILDREN

"COR!" SAID THE NEWSBOY (14; secondary modern; I.Q., 100+) as he came into my hospital cubicle: "Your telly gone wrong *again*?"

"No," I said, "I'm reading."

"You're *readin'* when you could be watchin' telly?"

"Don't you ever read?"

"Not when I could be watchin' telly!"

"But don't you ever enjoy a book?"

"Well—only if I get stuck into it; and it takes so long to get stuck in. And every time I finish a book, I think well, that's the last book I'm going to read."

He really is telly-mad. He wears a "Six-five Special" shirt; and his only outings, apart from visits to his girl's folks (to watch *their* telly) are down to the Met. to see Marty or Cliff or one of the other Saturday TV hep-hip boys.

He is, however—according to the Nuffield Study *Television and the Child**—exceptional, one of the worst-hit. The study is, in fact, very reassuring after all that the scare-mongers have said; and brings us back to reality with a reminder of just how resilient most of us and our children are. We need not seriously fear a near future in which reading is a specialist skill and our only spiritual nourishment is electronic. We are likely to overcome the perils of television just as we overcame those foreboded in films, or the theatre, or, earlier still, in reading itself.

The heavy viewers are, it seems, those who would in any case be dependent upon the most readily available entertainments—films, radio or comics. On the whole television ousts *alternative* rather than *supplementary* activities. Book-reading, outdoor play and social activities do not suffer as much as radio, pictures and comic-reading. And if television does not appreciably increase general knowledge, at least it does not adversely affect school performance, or family relationships—or even the eyesight. Above all the study is at pains to refute absolutely the vague but familiar charge that television makes children "passive".

The picture is not all so cheerfully negative, of course. There remains the consideration of those things (they are rather unexpected) which frighten or disturb children. There are those overwhelming problems of taste: why, given a choice, will the

children, like their parents, so unhesitatingly select what seems least beneficial?

Moreover the changeover from the "alternative" sources of entertainment cannot be entirely without effect. To take only the cinema, the drop in attendances since 1950 must largely be attributed to television. The Nuffield Study suggests, however, that it is not the complete Pied Piper it has sometimes been supposed. The new viewers, it is true, are wooed away from the cinema for a time; but as they grow older, particularly as they develop adolescent social needs, they return. It looks as if it is rather the mums and dads who have deserted the cinemas for the fireside. It remains to be seen whether the television-reared generations will maintain their adolescent loyalty to films in later life.

Still, a fair proportion of children are removed from the cinema's influence to that of television at a critical period. How different is the impact of the newer medium? For even though there is little appreciable effect upon general knowledge and school performance, there must be a *cumulative* effect derived from the values presented—values which prove, the Study found, "surprisingly consistent."

Television's influence is likely to be the more powerful, simply because the dosage is so much greater. In the old days the real problem type of habitual cinemagoer probably spent no more than fifteen hours a week at the pictures. Now, it appears, the average child viewer spends 11-13 hours in front of the set.

And what are the values he is absorbing? :—

The world of television drama tends to be that of upper middle-class urban society. The occupations of people of this social level are depicted as worthwhile, while manual work is presented as uninteresting. Television plays teach that self-confidence and toughness are needed to achieve success—goodness of character is not enough; that life is difficult, especially for women; that marriages are frequently unhappy, and parent-child relationships often strained. Events rarely turn out satisfactorily and virtue seldom brings happiness in its train. Violence is an inevitable part of life, and good people often resort to it. Not so very different from life on the big screen, after all. But as we have seen, the dosage is much bigger.

The Nuffield researchers do not see the overall effects as being too alarming. By comparison with non-viewing controls, viewers seemed more ambitious and "in their job values they were more 'middle-class'." About foreigners viewers "made fewer value judgments"; though their picture of English social life seems to have been rather over-coloured. Asked to describe the living room of a really rich family, one child spoke of:

"large brilliant carpets, a television set, a radiogram, a chandelier, a washing machine."

Another wrote:

"It has beautiful furniture and a big fire. The man of the house is sitting by the fire reading, the lady is biting her finger-nails. No-one speaks."

At the same time, children's images of their own lives remain unadulterated. A characteristic description of an ordinary family's living room ran:

"It has a tweed sofa with an oak table and chairs and side-board, a twelve-inch television, and rather a small old wireless."

On the whole, then, the picture we derive of the relation of

* TELEVISION AND THE CHILD, by Hilde T. Himmelweit, A. N. Oppenheim, Pamela Vince. (O.U.P. for the Nuffield Foundation. 42s.)

cinema and television in the child's life, is that while the easy availability of television may temporarily woo him away from the cinema, the social needs of adolescence will almost certainly win him back to the picture-house. The influence of the two is not very different in kind, only in potency. Finally, it seems, there is room for faith in human resilience: the invention of the cinema did not mark the start of universal spiritual decay; and it is no more likely that the introduction of a third channel will inevitably bring Armageddon.

DAVID ROBINSON

VON ROSSELLINI ZU FELLINI, by Martin Schlappner. Illustrated. (Origo Verlag, Zurich.)

DR. MARTIN SCHLAPPNER, the influential Swiss film critic, has written a well-documented history and objective analysis of the Italian neo-realist film. Why neo-realist, he asks? There was already realism in Italian cinema thirty years before *Roma, città aperta*. In 1916 films were made which depicted the misery and corruption in Italy. They were the answer to what Schlappner calls *d'Annunzianism*, after Gabriele d'Annunzio who dominated with his rhetoric and romanticism the Italian cinema of his day. "The realistic film found little echo among the Italian public." The situation has not changed much since: the Italian cinema is dominated by the average dubbed Hollywood film.

Under Fascism important directors—de Sica among them—took refuge in the filming of classical novels. Barbaro, the documentary producer, translated Pudovkin's writings on the film and in 1942 used the term neo-realism for the first time. This was also the year of Visconti's *Ossessione*, based on James Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. It was soon banned. Not only the American novel but the English documentary stood at the cradle of neo-realism.

In *Roma, città aperta* (1945) Rossellini used non-professionals, and also Anna Magnani; in *Paisa* (1946) there were no professional actors and no fixed dialogue. Then with *Riso Amaro* (1949) stardom came into the neo-realist film; and, Schlappner believes, this was a setback. Occasionally important social issues were tackled, but the majority of films were just episodes. Then, suddenly, there was a new development: works like *I Vitelloni*, *La Strada* and *Notti di Cabiria* again made the Italian film something exciting. Schlappner devotes a long chapter to Fellini, whose work to him represents a "spiritual deepening."

This well-illustrated book ends with descriptions of the leading directors and actors of the Italian cinema. *From Rossellini to Fellini* is written out of a conviction of the value of the neo-realist contribution to the cinema; an English translation of the book should be welcome.

WILHELM VIOLA

Correspondence

The Critical Issue

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—There is nothing like a letter from an A.Y.M. for brightening up a correspondence column, but it is difficult to gather from Mr. Ian Jarvie's letter in your last issue just what he is angry about. Someone is getting it in the neck, that is clear; but who, or for what, it is not easy to see.

Perhaps the clue lies in the evident sadness with which Mr. Jarvie observes that the avant-garde of yesterday is the conventional middle-brow cinema of today. To me this is a matter for rejoicing, and if the middle-brow cinema of today were to become the popular cinema of tomorrow my joy would be even greater; I was impressed by *Los Olvidados* and *A Man Escaped* and I would be delighted to think that in ten years' time Odeons-full up and down the country will be similarly im-

pressed. Not so Mr. Jarvie: happily, he says, Bardem, Buñuel and Bresson are not becoming widely accepted. Happily, presumably, because the acclamation of the Establishment (i.e. the Film Societies, the N.F.T. audiences and Miss Lejeune) renders any kind of film unworthy of serious consideration.

Now no-one questions the right of Mr. Jarvie and his colleagues to shoot college newsreels and not read SIGHT AND SOUND, but he suggests obscurely that the queues at the N.F.T. for, say, *Potemkin*, are somehow stifling the younger generation's artistic endeavour. Because Miss Lejeune liked *Wild Strawberries*, he seems to say, young people must make their own films or become pious and conventional. All this is, to say the least, hard to understand.

As for SIGHT AND SOUND itself, of course it has its eccentricities—in its last issue, for example, the editorial which found *A Touch of Evil* to be "more of a film" than *The Defiant Ones*, or the ecstatic review of *The Man Upstairs* (surely the silliest film of the year). Mr. Jarvie finds them tedious; I find them endearing. Perhaps this is because on the whole I am interested in what SIGHT AND SOUND is about. I really want to know how Satyajit Ray made *Pather Panchali* and what went on at Brussels, and Mr. Jarvie presumably does not.

Anyway, his colleagues who would rather read *Films and Filming* missed what he truthfully describes as a very stimulating discussion on "The Critical Issue," didn't they?

Yours faithfully,

ANTHONY BROOKS.

10 Lancaster Road,
London, S.E.25.

SIR,—Having been involved in a University Film Society for the last four years, I must criticise the irresponsible and defeatist attitude of Ian Jarvie. It is difficult to discover the foundations of his complaints, particularly as it is arguable that Buñuel, Bardem, Bresson are "O.K.," and the latter has a "nice, gentle" approach. However, the key seems to be: "*Death of a Cyclist* did not do too well and was taken off, but who cared?—they had seen it"—surely plain selfishness. No-one who believes the cinema a *worthwhile* art can dismiss the small audience for an admired film in the above terms. His praise for Nazi films and Hitchcock entertainers seems merely a desire for "kicks," perhaps an attempt to forget a boring life, depressingly represented in neo-realism. Certainly his "isolated, almost idiosyncratic line" is not typical of Cambridge, which is nearly completely conventional, except for a few "arty" inverters oblivious to reality, and the more dynamic organisers.

However, no "movement" which Ian Jarvie represents, is going to make any impact unless it attempts to be positive, to make its concrete assumptions known and discussed. Free Cinema did this, and the result has had a positive effect on films and politico-social thought. Mr. Jarvie dismisses the first programme for technical incompetence, unjustified as regards *O Dreamland* and *Momma Don't Allow* by all the usual standards, but surely ridiculous as the movement was primarily concerned with conception, not technique.

I do agree, however, that there is a need for a so-called anti-SIGHT AND SOUND approach. The majority of Mr. Jarvie's targets have the same failing as is evident in his own attitude, an absence of concern. Articles are too tame, too wrapped up in technique or general surveys. A director is analysed like a Royal Commission, and conclusions are remote, buried under a welter of conditional clauses. Judgments are too sober and refined. Unpretentious films are cynically dismissed, like Roud's body blow to Torre-Nilsson's near masterpiece *El Secuestrador*, while the mighty earn careful and kind analysis. False values are rarely exposed; John Gillett's review of *Inn of the Sixth Happiness* is an unusual and excellent exception. The theatre has *Encore* to perform its fighting duties, and it is this pugnacious attitude which any new magazine would need.

If the cinema is to survive beyond million pound blockbusters and trivial service farces, a great deal of fighting is necessary. The Fourth Circuit and a change of basic approach from the present industrial film-making are two targets, but if these or anything else are to be achieved, writing must inherit from Rotha and Anderson a passion and urgency. If the cinema seems important, if one really *cares* for its continued and better functioning, people must emerge from their woodsheds, surrender technical experiment for positive action, and make their voices heard. Writing, working within the often stodgy but eminently worthwhile Film Society movement, teaching, lectur-

ing, making comprehensible films, these are the means. Perhaps, however, like Ian Jarvie, we are too rapt in our "personal house-magazines." The British Film Industry may collapse; the majority of the people may never have had the chance of experiencing a film by Bergman; but we still continue our inverted dilettanteism in the back-garden.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD FOTHERGILL.

Elms,
Shore Road,
Warsash,
Southampton.

The Immortal Land

SIR,—I wish to correct an error in your contributor's remarks about *The Immortal Land*. He refers to "the sound of a jet plane flying over the Temple at Bassae." It is in fact the Hephaestion.

Yours faithfully,
BASIL WRIGHT.

Marsden Film Productions,
9 Great Chapel Street,
London, W.1.

Accuracy or Agitation

SIR,—More for accuracy than political agitation, may I reply to Tony Buck's remarks in your 1958-9 Winter issue?

Mr. Buck said *Films in Review*, in an editorial preface to its report on the "Best Films of All Time" shown at the Brussels Fair, "accuses the sponsors of the selected 'greats' of being and of having always been Communists or fellow travellers."

What *Films in Review* said was: "The voting which produced this particular list was under the auspices of the Bureau International de la Recherche Historique Cinématographique, whose membership includes active Communists and both fanatical and opportunistic fellow travellers and dupes."

By characterising such editorial comment "paranoic," Mr.

Buck equated the word "includes" with the phrase "consists of," and failed to take into account two facts: (1) the membership of the BIRHC includes citizens of practically all countries now having Communist governments; (2) it also includes citizens of France, Great Britain, Italy, U.S.A. and other countries whose Communist or fellow-travelling identity is a matter of record.

Communists, like everybody, have a perfect right to root for whatever films they admire, or consider politically useful. Non-Communists have a perfect right to identify Communists as such.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY HART.

Editor, *Films in Review*,
31 Union Square,
New York City 3.

More for accuracy than political agitation, it seems worth recording the sentence in the FILMS IN REVIEW comment preceding that quoted by Mr. Hart. "ALL the films in this list [the Brussels Twelve Best] have always been actively promoted, and are now being actively promoted, among cinemaddicts and within film societies, by the Communist parties of every country of the world for political purposes wholly extraneous to their cinematic values."—EDITOR.

D. W. Griffith

SIR,—I am writing a biography of David Wark Griffith and would be grateful for the help of any of your readers who may possess relevant material such as letters, reviews, articles, cuttings, photographs or personal reminiscences.

All material will be copied and promptly returned. Acknowledgment will be given in the book itself.

Yours faithfully,
ZBIGNIEW WYSTUP.

Nowolipki 21B m.23.
Warsaw, Poland.

A PLEASURE OF PERMANENT VALUE

FILMS IN REVIEW

*The only US monthly seriously devoted to
every aspect of the motion picture
including its TV aspects*

Published continuously since February 1950, the back issues are bought at a premium by cinemaddicts, film historians, libraries, and institutions throughout the world. The articles, always profusely illustrated, cover *in detail* the careers of the foremost players, directors, technicians, *et al*; elucidate clearly every significant technological change; expound thoughtfully and *interestingly* every valid sociological, æsthetic, and philosophical problem related to cinema. Each issue also contains specialized departments dealing with: important current films (the reviews are honest and discerning); reviews of books about movies; films on TV; filmusic and the sound track; letters-from-readers containing hard-to-come-by, historically valuable, factual material; and a movie quiz for eggheads.

*Single copy 50 cents. Annual subscription \$5 everywhere
but the U.S.A., (\$4.50) and Canada (\$4.75). Back issues
65 cents each postpaid.*

FILMS IN REVIEW, 31 Union Square, New York City 3

TOPICAL TELEVISION

continued from page 97

report. The practice is an absurd and irritating one—and destructive of serious comment.

Finally there is *Monitor*, which has improved enormously since its beginnings. True, it still has Huw Weldon sidling apologetically on to the screen, attempting to project an image of the common man and looking instead like the personification of the BBC itself. But many of its items, such as John Berger's talks on painting and the recent feature on Theatre Workshop, succeed admirably. Peter Newington, the producer, emphasises that *Monitor* aims to reach as wide an audience as possible, while at the same time catering for those already interested in the subjects concerned. The programme's real object, he claims, is to make art part of human experience at all levels; and he endeavours to avoid critical attitudes expressed in abstractions. A frequent result is that artists are often related rather too literally to their physical environment by lengthy film sequences, while the social climate in which they work is almost ignored.

The pressures on producers of series which attempt important subjects must be enormous. The most practical threats facing such programmes are that they may be gradually squeezed into less popular viewing times, cut in length, or encouraged to attempt still more items per programme. This is undoubtedly truer of ITV than of the BBC; but the more insidious hazards of superficiality posing as fair play and of irresponsibility disguised as detachment are common to both.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Stills:

20th CENTURY-FOX for *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Tobacco Road*, *Flebus*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *Gigi*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Fudget's Budget*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *I Want to Live*, *God's Little Acre*, *The Horse's Mouth*, *Night of the Hunter*.
PARAMOUNT for *The Party Crashers*.
BRITISH LION for *Room at the Top*.
EALING FILMS for *The Scapgoat*, *Nowhere to Go*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *It Always Rains on Sunday*.
CHILDREN'S FILM FOUNDATION for *The Salvage Gang*.
ASSOCIATED BRITISH-PATHE for *Cry Baby Killer*, photograph of Nigel Kneale.
RKO-RADIO for *Face to Face*.
SATYAJIT RAY PRODUCTIONS for *Apur Sansar*.
PLOUGH PRODUCTIONS-WOLFGANG SUSCHITZKY for photograph of Paul Rotha.
SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI for *Ansiktet*.
DENIS AND TERRY SANDERS for *Crime and Punishment—U.S.A.*
ARGOS FILMS—PHOTO DIMITRI DALMAS for *La Joconde*.
FILM POLSKI for *Once upon a Time*.
HUNGAROFILM for *A Sunday Romance*.
NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA for *Le Merle*.
CBS TELEVISION-STORYBOARD for *Seven Lively Arts* titles.
STORYBOARD INC. for *Adventures of **.
CZECH STATE FILM for *An Invention of Destruction*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
SHANGHAI FILM STUDIO for *Why the Crow is Black*.
ZAGREB FILM for *Un Solitaire*.
RICHARD WILLIAMS ANIMATED FILMS for *The Little Island*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *March to Aldermaston*.
FORD MOTOR COMPANY—FRANK HERRMANN for *We are the Lambeth Boys*.
ROBERT VAS for *Refuge England*.
JAY LEYDA for *Bezhin Meadow*.
BBC TELEVISION for *Quatermass and the Pit*, *Tonight*.
GRANADA TELEVISION for *Under Fire*.
ASSOCIATED-REDIFFUSION for *Success Story*.

CORRESPONDENTS

U.S.A.: Albert Johnson SCANDINAVIA: Erik Ulrichsen
ITALY: Robert Hawkins SPAIN & PORTUGAL: Francisco Aranda
FRANCE: Louis Marcouelles GERMANY: Werner Zurbuch
POLAND: Boleslaw Michalek.

SOLE AGENTS for U.S.A.: Eastern News Company, 306 West 11th Street, New York.
PRINTED BY Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd., London, England.
BLOCKS BY W. F. Sedgwick Ltd., London.
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (4 issues), 16s. including postage.
U.S.A.: \$3. Price per copy in United States, 75 cents.
PUBLICATION DATES: 1st January, 1st April, 1st July and 1st October.
Overseas Editions: 12th of these months.

OLD MAN MOTOR CAR

Tatler "A Must for all who adore old cars . . . charming . . . disarming."
Punch "not only for people fascinated by the history of cars."

NEW YEAR SACRIFICE

Financial Times ". . . unusually appealing . . . exquisitely played . . . handled with sensitivity and compassion."

New Statesman "Here is a film which picturegoers not debauched by raucousness cannot fail to enjoy."

BOTH FILMS NOW AVAILABLE FOR
BOOKINGS ON 35 mm. AND 16 mm. GAUGE

Apply for complete catalogue

Contemporary Films Ltd

14 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

Telephone: GERRard 9392/3 'Grams: Confilms, Wesdo

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION REQUIRES INFORMATION OFFICER (Unestablished) to assist with programme of films for Government Departments. Most of the work devoted to original commissions and will involve liaison with sponsor departments and contractors at every stage up to acceptance of the show copy and of completed foreign versions. Experience or knowledge of British documentary film industry essential as are also visual imagination, skill in personal relations, method and drive. Experience of working with Government Departments and knowledge of the information services an advantage. Salary £1,150 to £1,330 (Men), £1,102 to £1,280 (Women). Write, giving age, full details of experience and qual., to Ministry of Labour and National Service (P.E.281), Professional and Executive Register, Atlantic House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Only those persons selected for interview will be advised.

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION REQUIRES SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICER (Unestablished) to take charge of Section responsible for selecting and then obtaining overseas distribution rights for suitable documentary films produced by or for industry or grant aided bodies, and those produced as private commercial ventures. Responsible also for the production of foreign versions. Essential qual. are a knowledge of the requirements of overseas information, some experience of the problems of working in foreign languages and dealing with industry. Knowledge of film techniques an advantage. Salary £1,395 to £1,660 (Men), £1,345 to £1,600 (Women). Write, giving age, full details of experience and qual., to Ministry of Labour and National Service (P.E.283), Professional and Executive Register, Atlantic House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Only those persons selected for interview will be advised.

London School of Film Technique

BASIC COURSES commencing 4th May and 7th September, 1959

A Comprehensive Course in Professional Film Making in which general guidance, lectures and practical demonstrations are given by working Producers, Directors, Lighting Cameramen and other Senior Film Technicians.

CURRICULUM

1st TERM—9 WEEKS *Theory*

1. GENERAL

The Evolution of the Cinema.
The Cinema's Place in Society.
Elementary Analysis of Films.
Cinematographic Language.

2. PRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Structure of Film Production and Distribution.
The Place of the Producer, Director and Scriptwriter.
Other Studio Personnel.
Organisation of Documentary and Location Shooting.
The Script as a Blueprint for Production.

3. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION

Script Treatment and the Shooting Script.
Breakdown of the Shooting Script.
Shooting Schedule.

4. CAMERA

Still Photography and its relationship with Cinematography.
Persistence of Vision.
Principles of Lighting.
The Mechanism of the Camera and Projector.
Principles of Composition and Movement within the frame.
Types of Lenses and their use.
Principles of Film Emulsions.
Light Meters and their use.
Principles of Film Make-up.

5. SOUND

Basic Principles of Sound Recording (Optical and Magnetic).
Types of Sound Recording Equipment and their uses.

6. EDITING

Basic Principles of Editing.

Practical Work

Care of Lenses: Care and Handling of Cameras and Projectors (16 mm. and 35 mm.): Projection and Presentation: Still Photography as an aid to Lighting and Composition: Elementary Studio and Location Lighting: Script writing exercises: Script Conferences for 16 mm. Production: Handling of Sound Equipment: Splicing and Film Joining: Use of Number Boards and Camera Sheets.

2nd TERM—8 WEEKS *Theory*

1. GENERAL

History of Feature Films.
History of Documentary Films.
Analysis of Feature, Documentary and Educational Film Principles.
Television Film Principles.

2. PRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION

Finance and Budgeting.
Comparison of Pre- and Post-Production Shooting Scripts.

3. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION

Analysis of Films as a Guide to Directors Technique.
Pace and Timing in relation to Dramatic Content.
The Director's Personal Interpretation of the Script.

Facilities at the School include: 2 studios, editing room, cinema, projection room, dark room, lecture theatre and workshop.

SPECIALISATION COURSES are available to those who have completed the basic course and involve a further six months' study. A full year's training occupies 52 working weeks.

EVENING COURSES COMMENCE 5th MAY AND 8th SEPTEMBER, 1959

Details from Secretary,

LONDON SCHOOL OF FILM TECHNIQUE
33 / 35 ELECTRIC AVENUE, S. W. 9 — BRIXTON 3344

4. CAMERA

Cine lighting in the Studio and on Location.
Lighting for Black and White.
Lighting for Colour.

5. SOUND

The Creative use of Sound Recording Apparatus.
Sound Synchronisation.

6. EDITING

Editing from assembly to Release Print.

7. ART DIRECTION

Art Direction from Drawing Board to Studio Floor.

Practical Work

Production of complete 16 mm. Documentary Film
Exercises on Location.
Editing and Sound Recording Exercises.
Studio and Location Lighting.
Exercises in Studio Production Procedure.
Script Conferences for the 35 mm. Production.

3rd TERM—9 WEEKS *Theory*

1. GENERAL

Present Trends and Future Development in the Cinema.
Detailed Technical Analysis of Films.
The British Film Institute.
Free Cinema.

2. PRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION

Post-Production Procedure.
Various Markets for the Finished Product.

3. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION

The Directors' Duties on Completion of Shooting.

4. CAMERA

Motion Picture Stocks and their characteristics.
Colour Temperature and Colour Photography.
Filters, Masks and Diffusion Discs.
Model Shots.
Back Projection; Split Screen; Travelling Mattes;
Dunning and Schufftan Processes.
Screen Dimension; Wide Screen; Cinemascope;
VistaVision; Todd A-O etc.

5. SOUND

Re-recording; Post-synchronising and Dubbing.
Music and Effects.

6. EDITING AND LABORATORY

Aesthetics of Sound and Picture Editing.
Negative Cutting, Grading, The Release Print.
Laboratory Work—Processing, Printing, Dissolves, Fades,
Wipes, etc.
Titling.

Practical Work

Production of Complete 35 mm. Film Exercises in Studio and on location.
Editing.
Sound Recording and Re-recording.

EISENSTEIN'S "BEZHIN MEADOW"

continued from page 76

film at once a specific art form and a psychological expression of reality.

Even the setting—the interior of the family's hut, complete even to a jar of cockroaches ready for active service in close-ups—was built up in an abrupt exaggeration of perspectives. A few yards away, the church exterior was being built with gilt and glitter.

Among his cast, Eisenstein included four theatre-directors. It may have turned out this way by chance, and then again it may have been because Eisenstein knew that other *regisseurs* would comprehend his wishes faster and with less argument. (The grandmother, incidentally, was not a retired theatre dowager: she was found by Eisenstein in an Institute for Aged Working Women.) In any case, working with both skilled and unskilled actors, he first solved their physical problems: what are my torso and limbs and head doing at this point? How will my movement here be managed? With skilled actors, and this included Vitka, he talked over the scene, uncovered all its emotional possibilities (but never once showing how a face must *act*) and went through it once or twice enlarging on the details. Then the camera was brought into action and the scene rehearsed several times, becoming firmer each time with crescendos and diminuendos of sound and movement. Usually, one long dialogue sequence was filmed straight through at first for the sound strip and the *mise-en-scène*, then broken up for the more telling middle and close shots. Before he came to the set, an actor never knew exactly which scene was going to be filmed, and lines were never committed to memory ahead . . .

POSTSCRIPT

Filming came to an abrupt halt when Eisenstein came down with smallpox. In his personal selection of every object that was to decorate the next interior set, the church, some germ waiting on an ikon or holy banner chose the atheist Eisenstein for the only case of smallpox known in Moscow for about two years. The last entry in my production diary was dated October 20th, 1935: "After a quarantine of three weeks (with daily radio bulletins), he'll convalesce for a month . . . Mid-December will see work resumed on *Bezhin Meadow*, with scheduled completion in May 1936. In the hospital he celebrated his 38th saint's day."

The pauses forced on Eisenstein by sickness created new problems. If his original schedule had been met, the film might have been finished without major crisis, and judged as a whole. As it was, during his long confinement with smallpox and a consequent influenza, there were inevitable changes, both in his own ideas about *Bezhin Meadow* and in official policy, especially in blunting the anti-religious campaign in rural areas. When he was ready to work again, both factors demanded a large revision of the script—though 60 per cent of the original script had been filmed. One of my last duties on the film (before returning to America) was to work as messenger between Eisenstein and Isaac Babel, who was helping him in the revision. Filming continued with the new script, but more pauses for illness and further revision accumulated tragically; and his colleagues were not very surprised when, on March 17th, 1937, Shumyatsky, heading the film industry, finally halted the production of *Bezhin Meadow*.

Join the Hansom Books Group

**Art and Artists
Books and Bookmen
Dance and Dancers
Films and Filming
Look and Listen
Music and Musicians
Plays and Players
Bookguide with
Books-in-Print
Technical Bookguide
Seven Arts Magazine
Seven Arts Book Club**

Proprietors: Hansom Books Ltd., 21 Lower Belgrave St., SW1

CONTEMPORARY FILMS

proudly
presents

4 *Great New
Film Classics*

Fredrico Fellini's Venice Award Winner

Vitelloni

"One of
the Best!"

—Time Magazine

Fredrico Fellini's *The White Shoik*

"Excellent . . . Clearly the effort of a genius."
—Archer Winsten, N.Y. Post

Egil Holmsen's Story of People Trapped in . . .

The Time of desire

FERNANDEL **"3 FEET IN A BED"**

"His face remains one of nature's most enjoyable jokes."
—N.Y. Herald-Tribune

Send for our latest catalogue

CONTEMPORARY FILMS, INC.

267 W. 25 St.
New York 1, N.Y.

Midwest Office:
614 Davis St., Evanston, Ill

A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two or three stars

- AFRAID TO LIVE** (*Gala*) An evasive study in male sexuality: murder trial, condemned cell, flashbacks, idylls, orgies. Approach smooth but enigmatic, and confirming one's suspicions that G. W. Pabst is happier with women than men. (Curt Jurgens, Elisabeth Müller.)
- ***AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS** (*United Artists*) Now well into its second year, this "show" remains a film like any other—but twice as long as most. Good performances by David Niven and Cantinflas and exotic guest appearances help pass the time. (Director, Michael Anderson. Cinestage, Eastman Colour.)
- AROUND THE WORLD WITH NOTHING ON** (*Miracle*) The title defies comment; the film, another romp around the nudist camps, barely demands it. (Director, Werner Kunz. Eastman Colour.)
- ***AUNTIE MAME** (*Warners*) Rosalind Russell, emphatically back in form, survives the stock market crash and an overlong, staccato script with incomparable style. (Forrest Tucker; director, Morton Da Costa. Technirama, Technicolor.)
- ***BLACK ORCHID, THE** (*Paramount*) Gangster's widow and lonely widower make a go of it in poor quarter of New York, despite her delinquent son and his possessive daughter. Affectionate observation, but denouement novelettish. *Reviewed.* (Sophia Loren, Anthony Quinn; director, Martin Ritt. VistaVision.)
- CARLTON-BROWNE OF THE F.O.** (*British Lion*) The Boulting Brothers' Foreign Office spoof, with Terry-Thomas fomenting strikes in a minor overseas territory. Mildly amusing, though its knockabout farce mixes uneasily with the contemporary political parallels. (Peter Sellers, Ian Bannen; directors, Jeffrey Dell and Roy Boulting.)
- ***COMPULSION** (*Fox*) Tentative, rather external dramatisation of the Leopold-Loeb murder case, scripted by Richard Murphy from the Meyer Levin novel, with Orson Welles making a memorably impassioned stand against capital punishment. (Dean Stockwell, Bradford Dillman, E. G. Marshall; director, Richard Fleischer. CinemaScope.)
- DANGER WITHIN** (*British Lion*) Prison camp treachery and escape story; standard ingredients, familiar cast, capable direction by Don Chaffey. (Richard Todd, Bernard Lee, Richard Attenborough.)
- ***DOCTOR'S DILEMMA, THE** (*M-G-M*) An early Shaw comedy-drama about the rights of artistic genius (tactfully stated by Dirk Bogarde) and the wrongs of the medical profession (stagily exploited by Alastair Sim, Robert Morley, John Robinson), dressed up attractively by Cecil Beaton. *Reviewed.* (Leslie Caron; director, Anthony Asquith. Metrocolor.)
- ***EVA WANTS TO SLEEP** (*Contemporary*) Lively, if overlong, Polish comedy with farcical and even surrealist overtones and a deliciously naive heroine in Barbara Kwiatowska. Its young director, Tadeusz Chmielewski, also takes a few sly slaps at Polish film conventions. (Tadeusz Mikulski.)
- FORTUNELLA** (*Mondial*) Ragged, noisy chronicle of a quixotic *gamine's* adventures with travelling actors and petty thieves. Fellini's script and Giulietta Masina's performance attempt to outbid each other in mannerisms. (Alberto Sordi, Paul Douglas; director, Eduardo de Filippo.)
- ***GIGI** (*M-G-M*) Colette's little fairy-tale of the *demi-monde*, with Lerner-Loewe lyrics and score, Cecil Beaton decor, and Minnelli at his most consciously decorative. Always charming to look at, and sometimes to listen to. *Reviewed.* (Leslie Caron, Louis Jourdan, Maurice Chevalier, Hermione Gingold. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)
- ***GOHA** (*Contemporary*) A Tunisian love story told with sophistication and charm by Jacques Baratier, here making his feature debut. Ripe Agfacolor; colourful playing from a mainly indigenous cast. (Omar Cheriff, Gabriel Jabbour.)
- *****GRANDE ILLUSION, LA** (*Films de France*) Reissue of Renoir's pre-war pacifist study set among French and German officer class in World War One. It doesn't perhaps wear quite as well as expected, though the playing (von Stroheim, Gabin, Fresnay) and the sentiments are still fine. A few missing scenes are back again in this version.
- HANGING TREE, THE** (*Warners*) Another Freudian horse-opera, with Gary Cooper as a disillusioned doctor in a Montana mining camp and Maria Schell as a temporarily blind patient. Some telling mob scenes, but generally heavy-going. (Karl Malden, Ben Piazza; director, Delmer Daves. Technicolor.)
- HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL!** (*M-G-M*) Marijuana, rock 'n' roll, hot-rod car racing, flick knives, Jackie Coogan as a fiendish dope king and Russ Tamblyn as a Federal Narcotics Agent-cum-juvenile delinquent. Rather weird. (Jan Sterling, John Drew Barrymore; director, Jack Arnold.)
- ***HORSE'S MOUTH, THE** (*United Artists*) Alec Guinness scripted and plays the lead in this adaptation of Joyce Cary's novel about a convention-defying artist of genius. Often very funny, but it misses the grandeur of Cary's conception. *Reviewed.* (Kay Walsh, Renee Houston; director, Ronald Neame. Technicolor.)
- HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, THE** (*United Artists*) Pedantic remake of the Conan Doyle story, with Peter Cushing as a pernickety and mannered Sherlock Holmes, and the usual Hammer Film mixture of blood, love interest and mood music. (Andre Morell, Christopher Lee; director, Terence Fisher. Technicolor.)
- LIANE, JUNGLE GODDESS** (*Anglo-Amalgamated—Gala*) Female Tarzan-cum-lost heiress extravaganza, decked out at long intervals with some barely exploitable erotica. (Marion Michael, Hardy Krüger; director, Eduard von Borsody. Agfacolor.)
- LIFE IN EMERGENCY WARD 10** (*Eros*) Predictable hospital drama, based on the TV series, with manly Dr. Michael Craig and dignified and understanding Professor Wilfrid Hyde White. Very smooth. (Dorothy Alison; director, Robert Day.)
- ****MARCH TO ALDERMASTON** (*Contemporary*) Resolute, often moving, account of the 1958 Easter protest march. Remarkable as a documentary record, but as propaganda it assumes too much. *Reviewed.* (Made anonymously.)
- ****MATTER OF DIGNITY, A** (*Curzon*) This study of the selfish struggle of the once wealthy to keep up appearances at other people's expense is absorbingly handled and magnificently played by Ellie Lambetti. (Eleni Zafriou, Dimitri Papamihail; director, Michael Cacoyannis.)
- NO TREES IN THE STREET** (*A.B.—Pathé*) Unsavoury essay in Willis/Lee-Thompson East End realism; more hysterical than persuasive. (Sylvia Sims, Herbert Lom, Joan Miller.)
- NUDIST PARADISE** (*Anglo-Amalgamated—Orb*) Romance in the raw, and as tedious in its moments of deliberate salacity as it is awesomely incompetent in its making. British, and apparently proud of it. (Anita Love, Carl Conway; director, Charles Saunders. Orbiscope, Eastman Colour.)
- ***PAPRIKA** (*Gala*) Tragic love story set in Budapest's slums in the 1930s, admirably realised by a new young Hungarian director, János Herskó. *Reviewed.* (Mari Töröcsik, Zoltán Várkonyi, István Avar.)
- RAELES SUR LA VILLE** (*Curzon*) Pierre Chenal back where he was 27 years ago, down among the gangsters, but the old documentary spirit and social preoccupation has become perceptibly jaded. Charles Vanel's killer retains a certain vestigial dignity. (Bella Darvi, Mouloudji, Michel Piccoli.)
- ****ROOM AT THE TOP** (*British Lion*) John Braine's novel about a North Country go-getter and the corruptions he resists and succumbs to. The film also makes a few compromises, which doesn't prevent it from being very vigorous and compelling; Simone Signoret understandably dominates. (Laurence Harvey, Heather Sears; director, Jack Clayton.)
- SEPARATE TABLES** (*United Artists*) Platitudinous study in failure, cramming Rattigan's double playbill into a single bed-and-breakfast display of crisis and confession. Anglo-American cast; Bournemouth hotel like a Gothic mansion. *Reviewed.* (David Niven, Deborah Kerr, Burt Lancaster, Rita Hayworth; director, Delbert Mann.)
- SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD** (*Cinerama Productions*) Large-screen, long-running world tour, taking in the sights of Greece, Japan, India, etc. Carries some excess baggage in the form of Lowell Thomas's deadening commentary. (Various directors; Cinerama, Technicolor.)
- SOME CAME RUNNING** (*M-G-M*) Strained account of the affairs and attitudes of an American novelist (Frank Sinatra) alcoholically resisting small-town conventions. Any point James Jones' novel may have made has got lost along the way. (Shirley MacLaine, Dean Martin; director, Vincent Minnelli. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)
- SOUTH PACIFIC** (*Fox*) High, wide and generally unhandsome version of the stage musical, stodgily directed by Joshua Logan. Happily the songs survive from a welter of eccentric colour effects and jungle decor. (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr. Todd-AO, Technicolor.)
- ****SUNDAY ROMANCE, A** (*Curzon*) Stylish period romance between servant girl and a "Sunday soldier." Another example of the new Hungarian cinema, it makes a social comment without losing its personal touch and has real visual elegance as well. *Reviewed.* (Iván Darvas, Margit Bara; director, Imre Fehér.)
- 39 STEPS, THE** (*Rank*) Richard Hannay's Highland adventures, remade in a version which owes more to Hitchcock's retelling than to Buchan's original. Mild comedy thriller, with the emphasis mainly on the comedy. *Reviewed.* (Kenneth More, Taina Elg; director, Ralph Thomas. Eastman Colour.)
- ***THESE THOUSAND HILLS** (*Fox*) Ambition versus integrity in Montana cattle country: unwieldy plot (from an A. B. Guthrie, Jr. novel), obsessive Freudian undertones (from Alfred Hayes' screenplay), but truthfully acted by Don Murray and altogether quite compelling. (Richard Egan, Lee Remick; director, Richard Fleischer. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

The IMMORTAL LAND

'By a Lover,
and for Lovers'

● *Basil Wright's* film on Greece, THE IMMORTAL LAND, was co-featured with WILD STRAWBERRIES at the Academy Cinema, London. This programme broke all attendance records for the theatre, and ran for four months.

● Reviewing THE IMMORTAL LAND *Dilys Powell* wrote:— "For the first time, it seems to me, a filmmaker has got somewhere near what Greece is—not simply a repository of heartbreaking monuments, not simply a landscape serenely and endlessly repeating its lovely shapes and lights, but a persistent life, heroic without grandiloquence, touching without sentimentality. Naturally Mr. Wright has shown us, in Adrian Leakins' fine camerawork, the monuments and the sites . . . but what suddenly pierces is the look of the Greeks themselves, walking, riding their mules, arguing, carrying on board island steamers their bundles wrapped in newspaper . . . A film by a lover, and for lovers."

● Filmed in Eastmancolour and for Wide Screen THE IMMORTAL LAND has narration by *Rex Warner* spoken by *Leo Genn*; excerpts from *Thucydides* spoken by *Michael Redgrave*; poems by *George Seferis* spoken by *John Gielgud*; the voices of *Katina Paxinou* and *Alexis Minotis* as *Electra* and *Oedipus*; and music by *James Bernard*.

● THE IMMORTAL LAND is a *Marsden Film* produced by *Gladys and Basil Wright* and it is distributed by

**CONTEMPORARY FILMS
LTD**

14 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1
GERrard 9392-3
Telegrams: Confilms, Wesdo, London.



**16MM MAJOR
RELEASES
FOR THE
SPRING!**



**HIRING DETAILS
FROM
M.G.M. PICTURES
16MM DIVISION
58 ST. JAMES'S ST.
LONDON S.W.1**



**"THE HAPPY
ROAD"**
Gene Kelly
Michael Redgrave

★
**"TEA AND
SYMPATHY"**
Deborah Kerr
John Kerr

★
**"10,000
BEDROOMS"**
Dean Martin
Eva Bartok

★
**"THE
VINTAGE"**
Michele Morgan
Mel Ferrer

★
**"SOMETHING
OF VALUE"**
Rock Hudson
Sidney Poitier

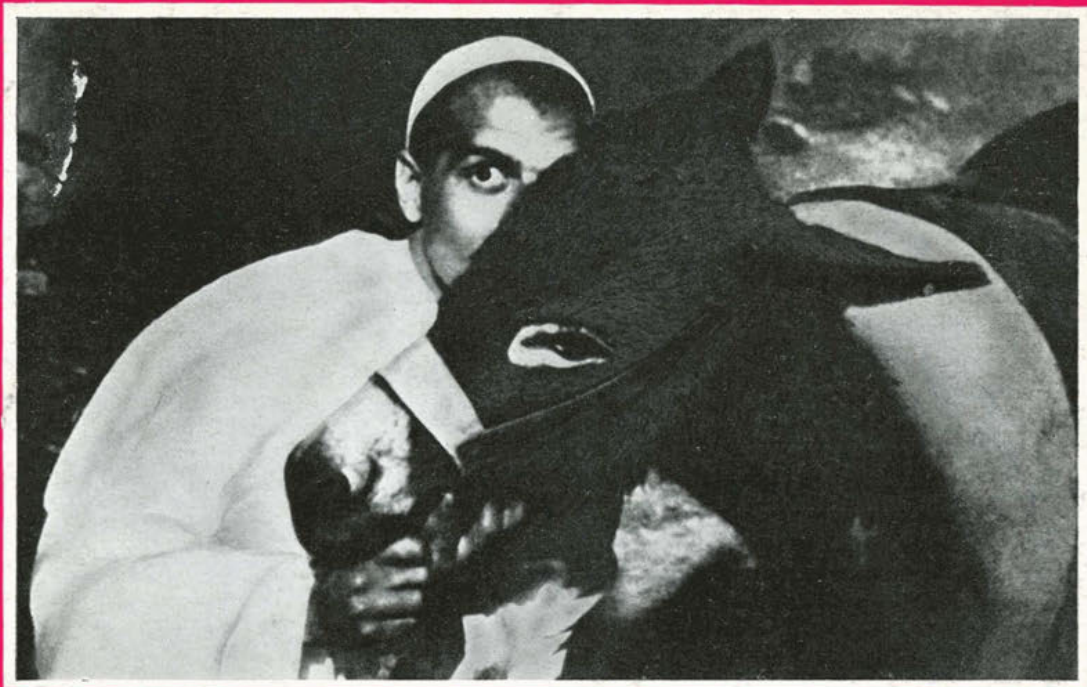
★
**"TEAHOUSE
OF THE
AUGUST MOON"**
Marlon Brando
Glenn Ford

★
**"BARNACLE
BILL"**
Alec Guinness

★
"GUN GLORY"
Stewart Granger

★
**"THIS COULD BE
THE NIGHT"**
Jean Simmons

★
**"HIGH
SOCIETY"**
Bing Crosby
Frank Sinatra
Grace Kelly



THE ACADEMY CINEMA
Oxford Street . Ger 2981

presents an outstanding international double programme

GOHA

The first major film from the Arab World

AND

EVE WANTS TO SLEEP

A brilliantly funny satirical comedy from Poland



For information about our current programme, write for a copy of the Academy Cinema Bulletin